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Killing Ideas without Killing Future Possibilities: Managing Employee Voice Rejection

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Killing Ideas without Killing Future Possibilities: Managing Employee Voice Rejection

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Dedication

To my parents for chasing the American dream for their children. The sacrifices they made when leaving their home country allowed me to reach for the stars and my PhD. To my husband for encouraging me through the most challenging parts of this research. Your unceasing belief in me helped me achieve more than I thought was possible.

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Killing Ideas without Killing Future Possibilities: Managing Employee Voice Rejection

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While a significant amount of past voice research has identified its antecedents and provided managers with guidance for how to increase the frequency of their employees' voice, our understanding of how managers' turn down employee ideas and subsequently influence future employee voicing behavior is limited. This dissertation focuses on the underexamined yet common and critically important part of the voice process, managerial rejection of employee ideas, through two studies. First, in Study 1 I use interview data from managers and employees to determine four dimensions of managerial rejection strategies: rejection totality, diagnosticity, interpersonal sensitivity, and bilateral inquiry; and two goals managers keep in mind when rejecting ideas: relationship preservation and employee coaching. I then draw from existing scholarship on politeness theory and education research to develop hypotheses on how each rejection dimension impacts future employee voice. In Study 2, I use a laboratory experiment to test these hypotheses and show significant main and interaction effects of these dimensions on employees' future willingness to voice and future idea quality, as well as mediating effects for face threat concerns and learning. My results suggest that managers should be careful in how they turn down employees' ideas because their choice in rejection strategies can have a significant influence on their employees' future voicing behavior.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

With the hypercompetitive state of today's business environment (D'aveni, 1994), it has become paramount that organizations create new ideas, learn, and adapt in order to grow and compete successfully (Penrose, 1959). This ability to adapt and improve oftentimes depends on getting employees of all levels to continually and proactively provide improvement-oriented input (Burgelman, 1983; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Figuring everything out from the top becomes especially infeasible as an organization becomes larger and more complex (Senge, 1990), so having ideas and suggestions effectively flow from employees to their managers and up the organizational hierarchy is important for improving organizational functioning (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Because employees are often closer to the work, more "in the weeds" than managers, and more in direct contact with external stakeholders such as customers and suppliers, they can offer unique and important insights into how to improve various processes that ultimately improve organizational performance (Pfeffer, 1998; Senge, 1990; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Indeed, getting employees to speak up has been recognized as a driver for organizational effectiveness for many years (Argyris & Schön, 1978), and organizational scholars have been interested in expanding our understanding of this phenomenon for several decades now (Morrison, 2011). Prior research has shown that when employees do speak up at work, organizations can reap many benefits, such as improved organizational problem solving (Nemeth, 1986), error detection (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), and learning (Edmondson, 1999), as well as reduced employee turnover (McClean, Burris, & Detert, 2012) and higher employee motivation (Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009).

Because employee voice is a critical component to organizational success (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), scholars have dedicated much of their research efforts on how to increase the

frequency of employee voice. For instance, research has shown that individual factors, such as an employee's personality type (Crant, 2003; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), sense of personal control (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008), and network centrality (Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010) impact how often they speak up. Scholars have also found that contextual factors play a key role in how much employees voice within an organization because employees use cues from their work context to guide their decision to speak up or stay silent (Dutton, Ashford, O' Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997; Morrison, 2011). A large portion of these cues focus on managers, who are typically the targets of employee voice because of their control of resources and their authority to take action. Because employees typically understand that managers have the power to reward or punish voice behavior (Detert & Burris, 2007), managers play a key role in establishing an environment in which employees feel safe and worthwhile in speaking up (e.g., Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). To foster an environment where voicing is commonplace, managers must act in a way that helps combat employees' feelings of fear and futility in speaking up (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). For example, prior research shows that a leader can foster this type of inviting environment for voice by exhibiting transformational leadership (Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010) and openness (Detert & Burris, 2007) and actively consulting employees for their opinions (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). When managers enhance employees' sense of psychological safety through more inclusive behaviors, employees will be more likely to voice (Edmondson, 1999; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Once managers successfully establish an environment where employees feel safe to speak up and ideas flow from employees up to supervisors regularly, a new managerial task is likely to become of concern: turning down some of the employees' ideas. Due to limited resources and

time, the reality in most organizations is that not all voiced ideas can garner managerial support (Deichmann & Ende, 2014). Turning down ideas, however, should not be taken lightly. Idea rejection done improperly can undermine the very open environment managers want to foster and reinforce many employees' penchant for holding back and remaining silent (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). For organizations to truly benefit from employee voice, prior literature on voice has largely assumed that employees will speak up more than once. This, however, is likely to depend on how managers respond to an employee's ideas as poorly executed idea rejection can discourage an employee's engagement and future willingness to voice.

Despite the burgeoning research activity around voice, there is relatively little guidance for managers on how to manage the aftermath of employee voice, particularly in turning down a portion of ideas offered by employees. As managers become more successful at eliciting voice from their employees, it is important for managers to know how to handle employees' ideas so that they continue to voice again in the future, even if their ideas were not endorsed. This research examines how the various ways in which managers turn down employees' voiced ideas differentially impact how employees accept and learn from negative idea feedback, which in turn effects future employee voice behavior. This research contributes to the literature on employee voice in the following ways.

First, I examine the taken-for-granted feedback loop of how prior voice experiences with a manager color future voice experiences. This research aims to give us clarity on a somewhat overlooked or assumed antecedent of voice, managerial reactions to prior voice attempts. By examining how different managerial tactics for turning down voice can impact an employee's future voice behavior, I help expand our understanding of the voice process. In addition, knowing

how employees respond to different styles of managerial idea rejection increases our understanding of how managerial behavior directly impacts an employee's decision to voice.

Secondly, by highlighting the various nuances of managerial idea rejection, I provide insight into how employees may respond differently to different forms of rejection communication. This builds on prior work that has looked at managerial responses to employee voice more on a continuum of positive or negative endorsement (e.g., Burris, 2012) by emphasizing the importance of the content of the rejection message. Although from the manager's perspective, the idea is being turned down, I argue that the way in which the manager turns down the idea can impact how much an employee really feels like his or her idea is rejected. More specifically, I identify multiple dimensions in which managerial voice rejection can differ and explain how these differences influence employees' post-voice reactions.

Lastly, by bringing attention to the learning opportunity that a voice rejection conversation offers the voicing employee, I identify a new way in which managers can have a positive impact on the employee voice cycle. By providing employees with specific contextual information on why their ideas are not endorsed, managers can help ensure that future ideas are of higher quality, which helps save time and energy for both the employee and the manager. In addition, when a manager is able to effectively transmit information to employees on how they can improve the ideas that they speak up about, employees are likely to feel a greater sense of self-efficacy in voicing, which in turn, should lower sense of futility in voicing and increase voice frequency (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

To deepen understanding of how managers turn down employees' voiced ideas and the subsequent employee reactions to this rejection, I undertook a sequential strategy of close examination (Creswell, 2003) through a qualitative study followed by a laboratory experiment.

Guided by the findings of the qualitative study, I drew from existing research on politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and education (e.g., Brooke, 2006) to develop hypotheses, which I tested in a lab experiment. Results from the lab study indicate that the way in which a manager turns down an employee's ideas today affect how and if the employee will speak up again in the future.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I will summarize the current research around voice, starting with the specific definition of voice used in this research. I will briefly review the beginnings of research on employee voice, including different conceptualizations the term voice has had in different research context. I will also review the findings on the impact of voice on groups and organizations, which in turn can help explain the rapid growth in interest of this phenomenon by scholars and practitioners alike in the last few decades. Much of this original voice research aimed at identifying the antecedents of voice, with more recent research adding insights on the impact of voice content and different strategies employees can use to become a more effective voicer, all of which will be covered briefly. Lastly, I will briefly summarize relevant research findings in the related areas of the feedback literature and the justice literature and explain what gaps in these areas may be addressed by this research.

Defining Voice

Voice is defined as upward-directed, discretionary, verbal behavior by a member intended to benefit an organization (Detert & Burris, 2007). This definition includes many specific characteristics that are integral to the dynamics that voice produces. First, voice is upward. Although some management scholars have examined voicing to peers (e.g., Detert et al., 2013) and within work teams (e.g., Edmondson, 1999), a large portion of voice research examines employees speaking up to their own managers. This is often the case because in hierarchical settings, employees are resource dependent on managers (Emerson, 1962). In other words, employees typically make managers the voice targets since managers are the ones who have the power, authority, and resources to enact employees' ideas (Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013; Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Tangirala, & Ramanujam, 2013; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). Without a

manager's endorsement, a voiced idea is not likely to be implemented and thus will not be an effective way for the employee to create positive change within the organization (Daft, 1978). The direction of voice is important because voicing to a peer, also described as sideways voice or speaking out, is likely to differ in meaningful ways from voicing to one's manager (Liu et al., 2010; Morrison 2011). For instance, as mentioned above, in terms of implementation likelihood, voicing upwards is more likely to actually lead to organizational innovation and increased effectiveness in comparison to voicing sideways since managers have more discretion and access to resources than an employee's coworkers (Detert & Burris, 2007; Detert, Burris, Harrison, & Martin, 2013). Also, the direction of voice likely affects an employee's risk calculus for voicing. While challenging the status quo to one's manager is risky since managers have the sanction power to withhold positive performance evaluations and promotions, voicing to one's coworkers is less likely to negatively impact these managerial-controlled personal outcomes (Detert et al., 2013). Relatedly, getting an idea turned down by one's manager is likely to feel more consequential and definitive than having the idea be dismissed by a single coworker.

A second characteristic that separates voice from other types of workplace communication is that it is meant to be constructive for the organization. In other words, voice is prosocial (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003), so it does not include behaviors such as complaining or speaking up to only help oneself (for example, to get a personal raise). This relates to the aforementioned characteristic of voice being upward versus sideways, since the content of voicing to peers about issues in the organization may not be constructive; rather, speaking sideways about organizational issues could often be better characterized as venting or complaining (Detert et al., 2013). Unlike complaining, voice can have very positive effects on an organization because of its constructive nature. For example, employee voice can help organizations improve

their learning (Edmondson, 1999), decision making and error detection (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

A third important characteristic of the conceptualization of voice used in this research is that it is discretionary. In other words, voice is not mandated by managers as part of employees' job descriptions, so employees can use their discretion when deciding whether or not to partake in the extra-role behavior of speaking up. Like other positive extra-role behaviors (also termed organizational citizenship behaviors, or OCBs), it is difficult for managers to evaluate voice as in-role behavior and punish employees who do not contribute in this way (e.g., Van Dyne, Cummings, & McClean Parks, 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Because employees are not forced to voice in their jobs, the decision to voice is often a deliberate one in that employees weigh the potential costs versus benefits of speaking up before doing so (Detert & Burris, 2007; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Thus, in situations where speaking up is perceived to potentially lead to negative personal outcomes, staying silent is likely to appear as a safer bet for employees, which could explain why much prior work on voice and silence has shown that a high number of employees have withheld ideas and suggestions from their organizations (Milliken et al., 2003; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991).

An important assumption related to voice's discretionary nature in much of the literature is that voice is inherently risky (Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Tangirala, & Ramanujam, 2013). Although voice is meant to be constructive, because it challenges the status quo (Van Dyne et al., 1995), it can lead to negative social and career consequences (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). An exploratory interview study of 40 employees by Milliken et al (2003) found that the top three most frequently cited concerns for not speaking up were being viewed negatively by others, damaging working relationships, and tarnishing one's public image. For example, if an employee is pointing out another employee's mistake to their manager, it may cause damage to

the working relationship with the employee's peer (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Indeed, managers and fellow coworkers can sometimes interpret voice behavior as not being a team player, rocking the boat, or complaining (Milliken et al., 2003; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991). Since having a positive public image within an organization has been linked to likability, perceptions of competence, and career rewards (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008), speaking up in an unfavorable context and damaging one's image can be quite a costly decision in the workplace (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998).

In general, managers and coworkers may be comfortable with and prefer to maintain the status quo (Nemeth & Staw, 1989), so an employee's voice can cause seemingly unnecessary disruptions that result in resentment (Frese & Fay, 2001). Other employees and managers especially can also hold negative perceptions of voicing employees because they feel threatened by an employee's voice since a challenge to the status quo can implicate the failure of those responsible for creating and maintaining it (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012). In effect, an employee's voice can make managers feel vulnerable, incompetent, and threatened, which in turn can lead to managerial backlash (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). In two experimental studies of university students, Burris (2012) found that employees who engaged in voice that challenged the status quo were rated as less loyal and more threatening than employees who supported the status quo. As a result, participants who challenged the status quo received lower levels of managerial endorsement and lower overall performance evaluations. Furthermore, managers who value consensus and feel that disagreements should be generally avoided at work are likely to view voicing employees more negatively since voice can disrupt a team's social harmony (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Consequently, managers may punish voicing employees by giving them negative performance evaluations and less social support (Liang, Farh, et al., 2012). Because voice is both risky yet

discretionary, it is unsurprising that people often refrain from speaking up unless their managers send strong signals that it is safe to do so (Edmondson, 1999). Thus, getting employees to speak up can be a major challenge for managers at work, and once they have successfully done so, managers likely want to handle the voiced idea delicately in order to continue to encourage the employee to speak up again in the future.

The Evolution and Segmentation of Voice Research

The origin of voice research. Before delving deeper into the research question of how managerial rejection impacts employee voice, it is important to acknowledge the rich history of voice research from the past forty years. The origins of voice research go back to Hirschman's (1970) framework of how people respond to dissatisfaction with an organization, which outlined three key factors: exit, loyalty, and voice. Hirschman defined voice quite broadly as "any attempt at all to change rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion" (1970: 30). Hirschman's main argument was that employees choose to voice their concerns and ideas, as opposed to exiting the organization, when they are loyal or "have that special attachment" to the organization (Hirschman, 1970: 77). Voice was characterized at the time as a constructive action meant to improve one's work conditions and subsequent job satisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1988). In direct contrast to voice, a fourth factor was introduced to Hirschman's (1970) model by Farrell (1983) named neglect, which was characterized as passive and destructive and includes such behaviors as reducing interest or effort and coming to work chronically late. Farrell (1983) outlined how these four employee responses differed along two dimensions, constructiveness versus destructiveness

and activity versus passivity, such that exit was described as destructive and active, voice as constructive and active, loyalty as constructive and passive, and neglect as destructive and passive. Hirschman (1970) also argued that how employees respond to dissatisfaction can stimulate positive change by helping managers identify problems and improve performance, which foreshadowed the connections scholars have since made between employee voice and positive organizational outcomes. Several scholars found theoretical grounding and empirical support for this typology of employee responses to dissatisfaction and used the framework to further predict employee behavior (Farrell, 1983; Rusbult & Lowery, 1985).

Specifically, many of the early voice scholars drew from Hirschman to predict under what circumstances employees are more likely to engage in each of the four specified behaviors: exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN), in response to job dissatisfaction (e.g., Rusbult et al., 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989). For example, Rusbult et al. (1988) argued that employees who were satisfied prior to the affecting problem would be more likely to respond in the constructive responses of voice and loyalty than the destructive responses of neglect and exit because they are more motivated to restore working conditions to a satisfactory level. The authors also hypothesized that employees would engage in more constructive responses when they had a large job investment (i.e., they had put in a lot of resources such as time and training into the job) because these employees had more to lose with their job. Their third hypothesis connected having high-quality alternatives to the current job to more active responses (voice and exit) with the argument that having good opportunities outside of the organization gives employees a safety net, such that they have the power to more freely try and bring about change. Although the effects on voice were weak, Rusbult et al. (1988) found general support for their hypotheses in three different studies (a simulation experiment, a field survey, and a lab experiment). Because they also found that high

job investment had a stronger relationship to employee voice when prior job satisfaction was high, the authors commented that voice may be regarded by employees as a costly decision that is only engaged in when motivation to improve working conditions is especially high. Turnley and Feldman (1999) explained their weak effects for psychological contract violations predicting employee voice (in comparison to exit) for a similar reason; because voice can be observed by supervisors and coworkers, it may be a riskier response to dissatisfaction and thus less likely to occur. Using data on federal employees, Rusbult and Lowery (1985) also corroborated that higher levels of employee satisfaction and job investment size encouraged voice and loyalty while discouraging exit and neglect.

Although this classic EVLN four-category model is widely known and led to some interesting findings, one key critique is that the definitions (particularly for voice and loyalty) are too broad and have multiple meanings (Barry, 1974). Specifically related to voice, Hirschman himself admitted it was a "messy" construct that included a wide range of behaviors (1970: 16). This confusion around the construct definition has led to some mixed results. For example, Withey and Cooper (1989) attributed their difficulty in predicting voice behavior using two longitudinal data samples to the commonly used measure for voice from Farrell (1983) having low internal consistency (also present in Rusbult et al. [1988]). They noted that due to the conceptualization of voice being so inclusive at the time, the construct could perhaps be broken down into several different subcomponents for greater consistency. Indeed, Hirschman (1970) and other early voice scholars' broad characterization of voice broad included any behaviors that tried to improve current conditions, such as taking action to solve a problem and asking coworkers for help (Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Rusbult et al., 1988), which now relate more closely to other constructs separate from voice such as taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999) and information seeking (Morrison,

1993) respectively. Because this broad definition of voice and resulting low internal consistency in studies oftentimes led to low levels of variance explained (e.g., Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Withey & Cooper, 1989), many later organizational scholars worked to refine and clarify the definition to what was described above (e.g., Morrison, 2011; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Other conceptualizations of voice and relevant findings. Perhaps due both to the prominence of Hirschman's (1970) framework and the inclusive nature of the voice construct, voice has been used by different research streams concurrently in significantly different ways, such that it is important to distinguish between the various voice conceptualizations. For example, voice has been used in literatures relating to organizational justice, whistle-blowing, and issue-selling. Despite having slightly different ideas of how voice is defined, research from all of these literatures, which will be discussed in depth below, have added much to our understanding of voice.

Organizational justice. The literature on organizational justice, which refers to people's perceptions of fairness in the organization, developed initially from many scholars' interest in employees' reactions to the distribution of work-related rewards (Greenberg, 1987). Specifically, early justice scholars were studying the distributive dimension of justice (e.g., Adams, 1965). The next wave of justice researchers focused on a new justice dimension, procedural justice, which refers to the perceived fairness of the procedures used to determine employee outcomes (e.g., Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Although two other justice dimensions have since emerged (i.e., interpersonal justice, the perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment during description of the procedures and outcomes; and informational justice, the perceived fairness of the information used in communicating procedures and outcomes [Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005]), Hirschman's "voice" term (1970) was

used in particular in research on procedural justice (e.g., Folger, 1977) as a means to make procedures more fair. For instance, in an experiment on groups of middle school boys, Folger (1977) found that being able to express what amount of money one should receive from the "manager" (supposedly another boy who was assigned this role in the experiment) led to higher ratings of procedural fairness for participants placed both in high distributive fairness conditions and low distributive fairness conditions. So, despite being given unfair distributive outcomes, participants with a chance to express themselves improved perceptions of procedural fairness. This well-established "voice effect" (Greenberg & Folger, 1983) has been explained by different lines of reasoning such as the instrumental view, which asserts that people given a voice opportunity assume that voice will sway outcomes in their favor, leading to higher decision outcome expectations that lead to higher procedural fairness evaluations (Thibaut & Walkers, 1978). On the other hand, the group-value model (also known as the value expressive model) characterizes the opportunity to voice as a symbolic message to participants that they are valued and trusted members of the group, such that voice leads to greater satisfaction with the process even when voice is not instrumental (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Prior research has shown that both views seem to contribute to the voice effect – while instrumental voice has been shown to lead to higher justice evaluations than non-instrumental voice, non-instrumental voice has been shown to lead to higher justice evaluations than no voice at all (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). Scholars have also found that the increase in process control that is gained from being given the opportunity to speak up and thus possibly influence a decision increases participants' acceptance of the decision (Lind et al., 1990) and endorsement of leaders making the decision (T. R. Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985).

While the justice literature has demonstrated how the opportunity of voice can lead to positive outcomes for employees and employers, it is less clear how actual voice behavior impacts individuals and organizations. One key critique in the use of voice in the justice literature is the confounding of two voice concepts, voice opportunity and voice behavior (Avery & Quiñones, 2002; Morrison, 2011). Many justice studies have not fully taken into account whether or not individuals actually do provide input (e.g., Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Lind et al., 1990). In other words, whereas voice as used in this paper is a form of individual communication behavior, voice in much of the procedural justice tradition is more of a structural feature of organizational procedures and policies (Lind et al., 1990). For example, Lind et al. (1990) tested the effects of voice on justice perceptions by splitting participants into different experimental treatment groups of voice versus no voice. Although participants in the voice conditions were given the opportunity to voice (which many but most likely not all participants took advantage of), the researchers did not use an actual measure of *individual* voice to determine the effect on justice perceptions. As another example, in two experiments using case scenarios, Hunton, Hall, and Price (1998) manipulated voice opportunity rather than voice magnitude by telling participants in each experimental condition that their supervisor had asked them to express their opinions for a number of choices (e.g., 0, 5, 10, 15, 20 of 20 choices). Because justice researchers have focused more on the individual consequences for having an opportunity to voice, the justice voice literature is quite distinct from the research literature on OCB-type voice as described above, which focuses more on the causes or consequences of actual voice behavior.

Voice in ILR and HRM research. Another group of researchers that drew from Hirschman's voice term (1970) are from the industrial labor relations (ILR) and human resource management (HRM) traditions. Scholars from this area define voice quite broadly, including such

practices as formal grievance procedures, suggestion systems, work councils, survey feedback, employee-management meetings, and task forces into their conceptualization of voice (Spencer, 1986). Similar to research on prosocial voice, research in this area has shown that employees are more likely to use such voice procedures when they feel that it will be useful and safe, especially in relation to alternate possible responses such as withdrawal or cognitive adjustments (Klaas, 1989; Kuhn, 1961). Klaas' expectancy model of grievance behavior (1989) in particular argued that employees likely carefully consider the possible costs and benefits of filing a grievance when making the decision to address management contract violations. In support of this, Gorfin (1969) for example found in a number of interviews at one manufacturing plant that employees were less willing to use suggestion schemes when they felt that managers were indifferent to their ideas, making suggestions seem futile. In addition, in a study of self-report data from members of six blue-collar unions, Bacharach and Bamberger (2004) found that employees were more likely to file a grievance when they perceived the employer was more dependent on them, presumably because they felt it was safer to speak up when they had such enhanced labor power.

There are some key distinctions to consider between the study of voice in the OCB tradition versus the ILR and HRM traditions. Firstly, some of the research in the ILR and HRM literature minimizes the possible risks of using voice since it can be exercised anonymously. For instance, Gorfin (1969) notes that suggestions can be given without any attachment to a specific employee, and Cappelli and Chauvin (1991) note that employees may be shielded from management reprisals and administrative costs of filing a grievance via their union. This is important because much of the research on voice in the OCB tradition links voice to an individual's assessment of personal risk based on *not* being anonymous when providing the idea, and research on the effects of anonymity in voice is quite limited (Klaas,

Olson-Buchanan, & Ward, 2012). On a related note, similar to justice research, many studies in the industrial labor relations (ILR) and human resource management (HRM) traditions have used a count or other aggregate measure of voice-related employee relations practices to look at the impact of voice on outcomes such as employee turnover (e.g., Bacharach & Bamberger, 2004; Spencer, 1986) rather than examine the actual individual use of these practices. As noted above, having the opportunity to voice in a variety of avenues does not necessarily mean that individuals will actually use each or any avenue, so only measuring opportunities to voice or aggregate counts of voice levels could lead to misleading results when thinking about individual voice behaviors and outcomes. Finally, another key difference that arises in the literatures is the differing motivations for voice. While OCB voice is prosocial and thus meant to improve the organization, some of the voice in the ILR and HRM literatures is motivated by individual gain, such as increasing one's pay, removing a nuisance from one's job, or correcting some sort of managerial wrong-doing (Gorfin, 1969). This can be seen in the opposite effects of job attitudes on use of voice – while several ILR/HRM studies have shown that lower job and supervisor satisfaction lead to greater use of formal voice procedures (Allen & Keaveny, 1985; Boroff & Lewin, 1997; Olson-Buchanan, 1997; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2002), voice studies in the OCB tradition have shown that greater detachment to the organization actually lead to decreases in voice behavior (e.g., Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008). It is important to understand these differences in literatures so that we can be clearer on what findings are likely to carry over when using the OCB definition of voice.

Issue-selling. Another distinct area of research related to voice that helped lay the groundwork for current prosocial voice research is the work on issue-selling (e.g., Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Issue-selling involves individuals'

calling attention to strategic developments that affect the top management team's understanding of the issues that will likely influence organizational performance. In their seminal theory paper on issue-selling, Dutton and Ashford (1993) highlight the importance of issue-selling for both organizations and employees. They argue that issue-selling is important for organizations for instrumental reasons because it can lead to better performance through superior strategies and for symbolic reasons because the legitimation of certain issues over others signals to employees and outsiders the organization's priorities and identity. Issue-selling is also important for issue-sellers for instrumental reasons since successful issue-selling can lead not only to action on an issue, but also to positive career consequences. Indeed, the authors note that "strategic issues are part of the currency through which their careers are made of broken (Dutton & Ashford, 1993: 402). Drawing from research on social problem theory, impression management, and upward influence, these authors provide a framework for when issue selling is most likely to be initiated and be successful based on how an issue is packaged (i.e., how the issue is framed linguistically, presented in terms of succinctness, facts, and emotions, and bounded in terms of other issues) and what processes are used (i.e., does the issue-selling involve others, is the idea sold publicly or privately, and is the pitch formal or informal).

Although OCB-related voice research has focused less on choices of issue packaging and selling processes, there are several ideas from this paper that have helped shape research on voice. For example, the authors proposed that the decision to sell issues is based on an employee's weighing of the potential risks versus rewards, which factors in their relationship with their manager and their perception of their manager's openness. They also noted that although issue-selling can be beneficial for the organization, it can lead to negative career consequences for individuals, such as decreased credibility and negative appraisal by peers. Subsequent papers on

issue-selling confirmed many of Dutton and Ashford's (1993) paper, which furthered our current understanding around voice behaviors. For example, using a large survey of female managers, Ashford et al. (1998) showed that an employee's perceptions of potential image risk and the probability of issue-selling success were related to willingness to sell gender-equity issues (negatively and positively, respectively). They also found that an employee's perceived organizational support and relationship quality with the message recipient decreased perceptions of image risk and increased their determination of the probability of issue-selling success. More recently, voice scholars have begun to examine choices related to idea packaging and the process of pitching ideas as noted by Dutton and Ashford's (1993) original framework, as evidenced by the research on collective voice, voice champions, voice framing, and private vs. public voice (Howell, Burris, Detert, & Pettit, 2015; Janardhanan, Bartel, & Burris, 2015; Kim, Burris, & Martins, 2014).

There are some key distinctions between issue-selling and voice that are important to note when comparing the two literatures. For instance, issue-selling is more specific in terms of the voice content in that it deals with larger, more strategic issues for the organization versus issues that range from such strategic organizational issues to smaller, more specific issues that could be just local to a work team or unit. Also, issue selling is more specific in terms of its typical message sender and recipient. While the issue-selling literature focuses mostly on middle managers pitching strategic issues to higher-level (e.g., top management team level) managers (e.g., Dutton & Ashford, 1993), the OCB-voice research that I draw from more broadly covers employees at all levels speaking up to their manager with a pro-social, constructive suggestion. Lastly, as noted above, some of the issue-selling literature incorporates other behaviors that connect with pitching strategic ideas, such as building coalitions for one's ideas and preparing formal presentations

(Morrison, 2014). These behaviors, while they can supplement voice efforts, fall outside of the OCB construct definition of voice.

Whistleblowing. Lastly, another similar area of research to voice is whistleblowing, which is typically portrayed as an employee alerting someone with the ability to affect action about an organization's wrongdoing (for review, see Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2008). Whistleblowing is distinct from the voice definition used in this paper in that it often involves speaking up to someone outside of the organization (such as a government regulatory agency), and the content of voice specifically involves exposure of wrongful behavior. However, there are still many similarities in the constructs and research streams that are worth noting. Similar to OCB voice, since whistleblowing is connected to potential retaliation and thus perceived as risky, the perceived safety and efficacy of whistleblowing influences an individual's decision to engage in this behavior (Marcia Parmerlee Miceli & Near, 1984). For instance, in a large survey study of employees from federal agencies, Miceli and Near (1984) found that observers of wrongdoing were more likely to blow the whistle when they believed corrective action would be taken. In a similarly designed study, Lee, Heilmann, and Near (2004) found that a higher organizational level of the wrong-doer was negatively related to the act of whistleblowing, likely because observers of wrongdoing of a high-ranking employee feel less powerful and more vulnerable to potential retaliation. One way in which the risks of whistleblowing can be reduced is to do so anonymously (Marcia P. Miceli, Roach, & Near, 1988) , which is a less common option of action studied in OCB-related voice research. Another finding relevant to voice research is how defining whistleblowing behavior as in-role has been shown to increase the willingness of employees to report wrongdoing (e.g., Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007; Trevino & Victor, 1992). For example, Trevino and Victor (1992) found supporting evidence using two scenario studies and a subsequent field study for their

hypotheses that group members are more likely to rate peer reporters positively and be willing to peer-report themselves when reporting is defined as a role responsibility for group members. This effect likely occurs because when speaking up is seen as a part of the job by management and other employees, it legitimizes the behavior and also reduces the perceived likelihood of retaliation.

Review of Recent Voice Research

Research on voice has expanded greatly in the last two decades. Scholars have examined the outcomes of voice at many levels – for the employee (e.g., Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), the work team (e.g., Edmondson, 2003), and the organization as a whole (e.g., Detert et al., 2013). Similarly, scholars have helped identify a large number of voice antecedents at the employee, manager, and organizational level (e.g., Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). In more recent work, researchers have begun to examine how people can voice more effectively and how voice differs in effect based on content (Grant, 2012; Liang, Farh, et al., 2012). I review many of these findings below.

Consequences of voice for teams and organizations. As noted in Chapter 1, much prior research on employee voice (including research from the various other conceptualizations of voice) has shown that it can be hugely of benefit to organizations (Morrison, 2011). The increasingly complex work environment demands a lot of information processing from managers such that their work is characterized by brevity and fragmentation, and their ability to attend to everything in the organization is virtually impossible (Mintzberg, 1973). Thus, when employees, who are closer to the daily work and interact more routinely with external stakeholders such as customers and suppliers (Pfeffer, 1998), provide their input on how to improve organizational processes, organizations gain a valuable different perspective from their managers. In other words, managers who receive voice from their employees can benefit from their employees' collective

knowledge and experience; rather than having to rely on a single set of eyes and ears, managers who receive voice can tap into a greater pool of informational resources, which can help them identify new opportunities and spot problems earlier (Detert et al., 2013).

In terms of organizational problem solving, the challenging nature of employee voice fosters greater thought around the issues by creating divergent thinking within teams, which helps decision makers attend to more aspects of the situation and create better solutions (Nemeth, 1986). Similarly, Farh, Lee, and Farh (2010) suggest that voice can stimulate creativity by helping team members reevaluate the status quo and adapt more appropriately for the situation. Voice has also been shown to enhance team learning (Edmondson, 2003). In a multiple case study of 16 cardiac surgery teams, Edmondson (2003) found that speaking up was integral to a team's experimentation and reflection on the results, which in turn improved a team's ability to learn how to successfully implement a new surgery technique. Because voice is comprised of constructive suggestions for change, it helps facilitate continuous improvement which can strengthen organizational performance, as evidenced by prior research that has shown that voice can have a positive impact on overall work unit effectiveness and the organization's bottom-line (Detert et al., 2013; Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011).

Another way to understand how powerfully advantageous voice can be in the workplace is to consider instances where employees have remained silent instead, resulting in dire consequences. For example, the well-known organizational catastrophes of the BP oil spill, the Columbia space disaster, and the collapse of Enron all were characterized by employees who failed to speak up to their managers about important issues with their work (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2011). Although these disasters may have been prevented if managers had realized the problems on their own, they also could have been avoided if employees had decided to voice about

the impending problems. As the economy and subsequently the work organizations do becomes more dynamic and complex, the value of employees' helping managers respond appropriately to their environment through voice is likely to continue to grow (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007).

Personality antecedents of voice. The research evidence that voice is connected to positive organizational outcomes (Morrison, 2011) has helped voice research grow rapidly over the last forty years. The majority of this research sought to answer the question of how to get the most voice in organizations, i.e., how to increase employee voice frequency. One strategy has been to identify personality characteristics of employees who decide to voice versus those who do not. In support of this approach, prior research testing Motowildo, Borman, and Schmit's (1997) framework of task versus contextual performance (e.g., performance on tasks that contribute *indirectly* to organizational success, such as helping, cooperating, and voicing) has shown that individual differences in personality relate more to contextual performance than task performance; thus, personality seems to matter for predicting who voices. For example, LePine and Van Dyne (2001) tested the relationship of the Big 5 personality variables with voice behavior using an experiment on undergraduates. They argued that because conscientious individuals tend to feel more responsibility at work and are more willing to engage in actions that improve their work situation, conscientiousness would be positively related to voice. They also hypothesized that extraversion and openness would be positively related to voice since extraverts are more willing and comfortable in speaking up and individuals high on openness value change and new perspectives. On the other hand, they argued that neuroticism and agreeableness would be negatively associated with voice since individuals high on neuroticism may be insecure and embarrassed about speaking up, while individuals high on agreeableness would shy away from possibly damaging interpersonal relationships by challenging the status quo. These hypotheses,

with the exception of the one on openness, were supported in their experimental study on undergraduate students working in groups. A post-hoc analysis on the effect sizes demonstrated that a theoretically "best personality" for voice (i.e., a participant scoring above the mean in conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and below the mean in neuroticism and agreeableness) was 10 times more likely to voice than those with the theoretically worst profile.

Drawing from a similar logic, Nikolaou, Vakola, and Bourantas (2008) tested the same relationships of the Big 5 personality characteristics with voice behavior on a sample of working professionals in Greece (with the exception of openness, which they hypothesized would have no relationship with voice). Their results lend further support to conscientiousness positively relating to voice and neuroticism negatively relating to voice (they found no support for a connection between extraversion and agreeableness with voice). Avery (2003), however, did find that extraversion was a significant predictor of the value of voice, so assuming that those who value voice will also tend to speak up more, this study corroborates LePine and Van Dyne (2001). In addition to the Big 5, several other personality variables have also been connected to voice behaviors. Because voice is predicated on individual initiative and desire for positive change, prior research has shown that people with proactive personalities (Parker & Collins, 2010) and high openness to change (Lipponen, Bardi, & Haapamäki, 2008) are more likely to voice.

Prior research has also shown that several self-concept variables, which are often characterized as stable traits and thus part of an individual's disposition, impact an individual's voice behaviors. Both self-esteem, defined as the degree of positive self-worth an individual attributes to him or herself, and self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in his or her abilities for achieving important outcomes (Brockner, 1988), have been shown to positively relate to voice (Avery, 2003; Frese, Teng, & Wijnen, 1999; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Van Dyne & LePine,

1998). Regarding self-esteem, LePine and Van Dyne (1998) argue that this is because individuals who have a higher perception of self-worth are more likely to stand up for their ideas and speak up to authorities to improve their work. Similarly, Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) argue that speaking up places an individual in a vulnerable position that people with low self-esteem and thus a greater orientation towards self-protection are likely to avoid. Regarding self-efficacy, because voicers often weigh the possible risks of speaking up with the potential rewards, individuals who believe more in their abilities to effectively voice and thus actually improve the organization will be more likely to take on the risk as opposed to individuals who are not as confident in their abilities to enact change via voicing (Frese et al., 1999). Also, when people feel that they are well-equipped to handle a situation involving a certain behavior such as voice, they are more likely to feel a sense of control, which in turn increases their likelihood to engage in that behavior (Liang, Farh, et al., 2012). In other words, self-esteem can produce a greater feeling of importance for speaking up (as in, my idea is worthwhile) while self-efficacy can produce greater feelings of safety and control (as in, I can pitch an idea effectively enough to be rewarded rather than punished). The studies above on personality factors and voice demonstrate that some individuals are more likely to speak up at work than others purely based on what traits they bring into the workplace. Luckily, scholars have greatly expanded the research on voice antecedents such that managers who are hoping to solicit more ideas from their employees can impact voice in other ways.

Employee attitude antecedents of voice. In addition to personality, employee attitudes at work have been shown to influence voice (Rusbult et al., 1988). For example, Fuller, Marler, and Hester (2006) hypothesized that an employee's felt responsibility for constructive change, defined as an individual's belief that one is personally obligated to bring about beneficial change

(Morrison & Phelps, 1999), will have a positive association with voice. They argued that individuals high on this characteristic are more motivated to analyze work processes and thus more able to identify improvement opportunities at work to speak up about. A survey of employees (measuring individual felt responsibility for constructive change) and their managers (measuring subordinate voice) showed support for this hypothesis. Other studies, including surveys of mid- to senior-level managers by Parker and Collins (2010) and surveys of employees at a Chinese company by Liang, Farh, et al. (2012), corroborate this finding. Parker and Collins (2010) noted simply that individuals high on felt responsibility for change will be more likely to behave proactively by voicing because it helps them fulfill their perceived responsibilities, while Liang, Farh, et al. (2012) added that these individuals are more likely to see voice as a means of caring for and acting responsibly within the organization.

Job satisfaction and identification with the work organization also seem to affect how frequently employees voice. Rusbult et al. (1988) argued that individuals with high job satisfaction will voice more because they feel more motivated to speak up and more optimistic about seeing improvements than individuals with low job satisfaction. Also, the authors suggest that individuals with low job satisfaction are more likely to engage in destructive responses, such as chronic absenteeism, rather than constructive responses, such as voice. Data from two separate studies supported this hypothesis. For organizational identification, which is defined as a sense of oneness with an organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), scholars have argued that it has a positive association with voice because individuals who define themselves in terms of the organization's successes and failures will be more motivated to enhance a group's goals via active engagement and constructive suggestion-making (Burris et al., 2008; Lipponen et al., 2008). A survey study by Lipponen et al. (2008) shows a positive association between organizational identification and

a composite measure of upward and sideways voice. On the other hand, psychological detachment from an organization should lower voice frequency because detached employees are less cognitively vigilant at work, making them less likely to have suggestions on how to improve organizational processes. Furthermore, even when detached employees do have improvement ideas, they will be less likely to exert additional effort on a discretionary behavior such as voice since they are less driven to help improve the organization (Burris et al., 2008; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). In a multi-level study of general managers and their subordinates from a national restaurant chain in the United States, Burris et al. (2008) found support for their hypothesis, with employees with greater psychological detachment exhibiting lower rates of voice. In summary, because individuals with low levels of satisfaction and identification are less invested in the workplace than individuals high on these factors, they likely have less of a desire to exert the additional effort necessary and assume the possible risks of speaking up in order to help the organization.

Leadership antecedents to voice. As noted above, employees tend to speak up more frequently when they feel it is safe and worthwhile, and possibly the most influential factor that signals an accommodating environment for voice is the employee's manager (Morrison, 2011). Managers are not only the targets of voice, and thus the evaluators of ideas, but also, managers have power over outcomes and resources that impact both the implementation of the idea and the employee's career in terms of future performance evaluations and promotions (Morrison 2011). Consequently, the research literature on voice has placed a continued emphasis on managers and how their actions, behaviors, and relationships impact their employees' voice (e.g., Ashford et al., 2009). Firstly, the research seems to clearly indicate that having a poor relationship with your manager hinders employees from speaking up (e.g., Burris et al., 2008; Milliken et al., 2003).

Exploratory interviews of employees about speaking up and withholding (i.e., not speaking up when one has an idea) by Milliken et al. (2003) provide some qualitative evidence that having a weak or negative relationship with one's supervisor can lead to a perception that they will not be supportive of one's ideas, which in turn effectively deters employees from being open to voice. Burris et al. (2008) also argued for the hypothesis that psychological detachment mediates the relationship between the quality of interactions between the manager and subordinate and employee voice. They reasoned that employees who frequently experience low-quality and hostile interactions with their manager will begin to psychologically detach from the organization due to their growing dissatisfaction, which in turn lowers their willingness to voice. Using measures of abusive supervision (defined as sustained hostile behaviors towards employees; Tepper, 2000) and leader-member exchange (LMX, with low LMX characterized by employees feeling like their managers do not understand their needs or support them beyond formal expectations; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975) to capture the quality of the manager-subordinate relationship, they found support for their hypotheses.

Secondly, other than fostering positive relationships with employees, managers can engage in specific behaviors to increase the frequency of employee voice. Many of these managerial behaviors help increase an employees' sense of psychological safety, broadly defined as a belief that one is able to express oneself "without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990: 708), which in turn, positively influence employees' willingness to voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 2003). For instance, managers can convey openness by listening to an employee's ideas, giving them sincere consideration, and supporting at least some of them (Ashford et al., 1998). Detert and Burris (2007) argued that as a result of managers acting open, employees will more likely perceive lower costs for bringing up an idea and more easily

maintain their motivation for speaking up. Data from two separate studies support their hypotheses that managerial openness positively impacts frequency of employee voice, and that psychological safety acts as an important mediator in that relationship. Managers can also influence the frequency of employee voice by actively soliciting for ideas and suggestions. In a field study of nurses and their managers, Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012) found that when managers engaged in employee consultation, employees felt like they had more influence in the workplace, which in turn increased their voicing. These authors reasoned that employees feel more recognized and valued for their knowledge and expertise in the organization when a manager asks for their opinion because it is a signal that the employees' opinions matter to people higher in the organizational hierarchy. Once employees perceive themselves to have greater influence at work, they are likely to feel more confident and effective in voicing and thus voice more frequently.

Lastly, in addition to the above, managers can in general demonstrate certain leadership styles to encourage more voice. For example, in a field study of employees in China, Liu et al. (2010) found support for a positive relationship of transformational leadership with employee voice. Specifically they argued that transformational leadership leads to increased identification with one's supervisor because receiving individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation from a transformational leader can motivate an employee to adopt the leader's beliefs and values. Greater personal identification with one's manager enhances an employee's feelings of safety and obligation in voicing, which in turn leads to more voice behavior. Detert and Burris (2007) also found that transformational leadership encouraged employees to be more invested in reaching collective organizational goals, thus generating more voice. Walumbwa and his co-authors have found that ethical leadership also has a positive relationship with voice (Walumbwa, Morrison, & Christensen, 2012; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Ethical leaders

almost by definition solicit employee ideas and promote two-way communication (M. E. Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005), which as noted above helps increase employee voice. Also, because ethical leaders emphasize doing the right thing and model this behavior to employees, employees with ethical leaders will be more likely to challenge the status quo when it is inappropriate or unethical (i.e., voice). Ethical leadership also positively influences voice by increasing an employee's psychological safety because employees feel that ethical leaders are less likely to unfairly punish employees who speak out (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

Organizational culture antecedents of voice. Prior research on issue selling has shown that certain facets of organizational culture impact if employees speak up. For instance, Ashford et al. (1998) argued and found that perceived organizational support, defined as an individual's perception about how much an organization values their contributions and well-being, led to an increase in the perceived probability of issue-selling success, prompting more issue-selling. They also found that norms favoring issue-selling lowered the perceived risks of speaking up by providing guidelines on the appropriateness of the behavior, consequently increasing employees' voice. Similarly, Dutton et al. (1997) found that almost half of the individuals they interviewed on issue-selling commented on the supportiveness of the organizational culture as an important factor to consider before speaking up. Another study by Dutton, Ashford, Lawrence, and Miner-Rubino (2002) showed that when the organizational culture was more "clubby" and exclusive (i.e., employees felt that there was a dominant in-group that excluded them), employees not in the dominant group were less willing to engage in issue-selling. They also found qualitative evidence that a culture's conservatism was an unfavorable feature for issue-selling. It is important to note that managers are often looked to as barometers of organizational culture because they are seen as an embodiment of the organization and its goals (Schein, 1992). Thus their behaviors and attitudes

have a powerful influence on an employee's perception of organizational culture and their decision on how inviting their work environment is for voice (Ashford et al., 2009).

Developing research on voice content. Relatively recently, researchers have begun to sharpen our understanding of voice by categorizing voice based on the content of the voiced idea and showing how these different types of voice have different antecedents and outcomes. Several typologies of voice have emerged. Burris (2012) distinguished between challenging voice, which is intended to alter or destabilize the status quo, and supportive voice, which is intended to preserve the status quo, and found that managers rated employees who spoke up with challenging voice worse than employees who demonstrated supportive voice. Challenging voice ideas were also endorsed less than supportive voice. Liang, Farh, and Farh (2012) differentiate between promotive and prohibitive voice. While promotive voice expresses ways to improve existing work practices to benefit the organization, prohibitive voice expresses a concern with existing or impending practices that could potentially harm the organization (Liang, C. Farh, & Farh, 2012). These authors found that each type of voice was linked to different antecedents (felt obligation for promotive voice and psychological safety for prohibitive voice), and other scholars have found that they also could lead to different consequences (e.g., Li, Tangirala, & Firth, 2014). Lastly, Maynes and Podsakoff (2014) identified four types of voice behavior: supportive, constructive, defensive, and destructive. These types vary along the two dimensions of promotive versus prohibitive, and preserving versus challenging the status quo, and were found to also link with differing antecedents and consequences.

Developing research on voice recognition. Rather than examining the existence of employee voice in organizations, Howell, Harrison, Burris, and Detert (2015) examined the recognition of employee voice by managers. Using a field study of credit union employees, they

found that there could be notable differences between how much employees spoke up and how much their managers gave the employees credit for doing so. Their results indicated that managers were more likely to give credit to employees for speaking up if they had higher status, as indicated by their ethnicity, full-time employment status, and advice centrality. Furthermore, they found that managers' recognition of employees' voicing behaviors acted as a mediator between the relationship of voice expression with supervisor ratings of employee effectiveness even after 12 months of time had passed between ratings. Unfortunately for employees with low status, the mere expression of speaking up was not necessarily enough to get the performance benefits of speaking up due to managers' lower levels of voice recognition. Their research extends our understanding on the consequences of voice for individuals by highlighting the disparate effects status can have on managers' voice recognition and subsequent performance ratings of their employees.

Developing research on how to more effectively voice. Because probability of voice success seems to play such an important role in the decision-making process of employees who may or may not speak up, management scholars have recently begun to examine ways in which employees can be more effective voicers. For instance, Grant (2012) argued that emotion regulation knowledge, defined as awareness of effective strategies for adapting one's emotions to different situations (Côté, DeCelles, McCarthy, Kleef, & Hideg, 2011), is positively connected to voice. He argued that individuals with high emotion regulation knowledge not only would be better able to manage and overcome the fear of repercussions that is a primary cause for not speaking up (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000), but also would be more confident in controlling their emotions effectively while speaking up. Results from a multi-level and multi-wave field survey study with employees from an optometry company show that emotion regulation

knowledge not only predicts more frequent voice behaviors, but also enhances the way voice behaviors impact performance evaluations. Grant (2012) noted that speaking up while having poor emotion regulation (e.g., while very upset about something) can compromise an employee's ability to speak up effectively and constructively, leading to worse reactions from their manager.

As another example, Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, and Podsakoff (2012) drew from the persuasion literature to identify possible source, message, context, and receiver variables that impact how managers rate an employee's voiced idea and rate voicing employees during subsequent performance evaluations. One key message factor they specify as positively impacting the ratings of the idea and the employee is solution presence, which they argue helps decrease a manager's workload and signals an employee's real concern for the organization. Another key factor they specify is the context factor of timing (i.e., how early or late during the relevant organizational process is the idea presented). The authors argue that early timing will lead to more positive idea and employee ratings because suggestions made early on show a stronger sense of initiative than ideas presented late in the process and are more feasible to implement, which gives the impression that they are more constructive in nature. Data from three separate lab studies demonstrate that voicers were rated more positively in terms of liking and performance when they provided a solution with their suggestion and spoke up early on in the process. Supporting their arguments, the authors found that voiced ideas that included a solution and were given early on were seen as more constructive, which in turn positively influenced performance ratings.

Kimmons, Burris, & Martins (2014) looked at how voice framing can influence managerial endorsement of voice. Drawing from research on cognitive economy and fluency (Rescher, 1989; Rosch, 1978; Wyer & Srull, 1986, 1989), these authors argue that managers are more likely to support an idea when the ideas components "fit" with each other through matching framing. They

note that voiced ideas have two clear components, the idea proposal (the actual content of the idea) and the idea justification (why the idea should be implemented), and each can be framed in a promotive or prohibitive fashion (focusing on new ways the organization can improve versus current harm done to the organization, respectively; Liang, Farh, et al., 2012). When the two idea components match each other, manager's experience a greater level of cognitive fluency (A. Y. Lee & Aaker, 2004) that leads to higher levels of endorsement. A multi-wave survey of managers and their employees supported the hypothesis that "internal fit" (when the framing of the idea proposal matches the framing of the idea justification) leads to greater managerial voice endorsement. Moreover, the authors drew from regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) to argue that matching the framing of the idea with the manager's predominant regulatory focus, promotion or prevention, also positively impacts endorsements. Because promotion-focused managers are likely to prioritize new opportunities, they should endorse promotive ideas that focus on new actions more. Similarly, because prevention-focused managers emphasize mistake avoidance, they should endorse prohibitive ideas that focus on preventing harm to the organization more. A scenario-based experimental study on executive MBA students gave support to these hypotheses. By framing components of the idea to correspond with each other and with the manager's disposition, voicers seem to lessen the cognitive burden on managers, resulting in greater levels of endorsement.

Lastly, in their paper investigating what employees speak up about and the endorsement consequences of voicing different types of voice content, Burris, Rockmann, and Kimmons (2017) found through a qualitative study that voiced ideas differed along three dimensions: the importance of implementing the idea, the resources required to enact the idea, and the interdependencies involved with implementing the idea. They also found in their interview data that employees'

ideas differed along these dimensions based on their level of identification with their local work unit versus their broader profession. Employees that identified with the broader profession were less likely to take into account the resource and interdependency barriers involved with implementing their ideas, which the authors argued has a negative impact on levels of managerial endorsement. A second field study supported the negative relationship between employee professional identification and managerial valuation of voice, with voice content related to the profession acting as a significant mediator. Finally, the researchers used a scenario-based experiment to show that voiced ideas with low importance, high resource constraints, and a high level of interdependencies needed for implementation receive less managerial endorsement than ideas with high importance, low resource constraints, and low implementation interdependencies. This study, while also adding to our understanding of voice content and its antecedents, provides guidance to employees on how to select the kinds of ideas that are likely to gain the most managerial support. As a whole, the studies above provide valuable practical advice to employees who are looking to increase their voice self-efficacy before deciding to speak up.

Summary. As one can see from the above review of research on voice, scholars have had much interest in how employees actively participate in their organizations by sharing their ideas and insights and the outcomes of such behavior. Because voice has been shown to help organizations improve (Morrison, 2011), much of the past research on voice has focused on how to maximize employee voice frequency. Although there have been many findings especially from the voice antecedent research that provide clear practical implications for managers on how to successfully create an environment where employees voice, there is not as much research that sheds light on how managers can handle the rejection of such employee participation. What remains to be answered is not necessarily how managers can garner more employee voice, but how

managers should handle employee voice when it arises plentifully. The more ideas are pitched, the more likely ideas will have to be turned down due to an organization's limited resources, managers' limited time (Deichmann & Ende, 2014), or the idea's low level of credibility and feasibility (e.g., Miceli et al., 1988). In a work environment where employees do voice somewhat regularly, idea rejection becomes an increasingly significant managerial task.

The way in which managers turn down ideas is also likely to be quite consequential for the employee. The prior research on how managers' attitudes and behaviors impact an employee's initial decision to voice alone should indicate the importance of how a manager's reaction to an employee's voiced idea will influence employees' subsequent willingness to speak up again. This research thus seeks to increase our understanding of this taken-for-granted antecedent of employee voice, managers' rejection tactics of an employee's prior voice. In doing so, I also seek to enhance our knowledge of the specific behaviors leaders can engage in to shape employees' perceptions of managerial openness (Morrison, 2011).

Although prior voice research has not yet focused much on how managers respond to employees' ideas, there are some other relevant areas of research that can provide some helpful information regarding the topic of voice rejection. The first area I explore further below is the feedback literature. Managerial responses to voice are a form of feedback to employees, so this research can help point to what characteristics of feedback make it more beneficial for employees. Prior research on negative feedback in particular can suggest what managers should avoid to make voice rejections less harmful to employees and their self-esteem. Another research area that can provide clues on how managerial rejection impacts employees is the interactional justice literature. This research addresses how employees respond when managers make decisions, with a focus on how employees are treated during the process. Rejection is typically an undesirable decision by

managers for employees, so the justice literature can give some guidance on how managers should enact that decision in a way that minimizes perceptions of injustice. Overall, these two research streams can provide useful background for thinking about voice rejection and its possible consequences.

Review of Relevant Feedback Research

Organizational scholars have been interested in understanding feedback, generally defined as information people receive about their performance (London, 2003), and its impact on employees' work for many decades now (for reviews, see Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Larson, 1984). Feedback from managers is important to employees because managers establish performance objectives and have control of various reward outcomes, such as raises and promotions (London, 2003). Giving feedback is also important to managers because it is an important tool for helping educate their employees on the organization's overall goals, which managers are more knowledgeable of (Silverman, 1991), and how to improve their performance to better align with those goals. The literature particularly on manager's giving negative job performance feedback can provide us with some preliminary guidance on the topic of managerial strategies for turning down employee voice. Specifically, prior research provides insight into the potentially harmful effects of negative feedback on employees and what characteristics make negative feedback more constructive and effective from the employees' perspective (Baron, 1988).

Receiving negative feedback from one's manager is more often than not an unpleasant or unexpected experience that can lead to feelings of shame, anger, sadness, and frustration (Kernis & Johnson, 1990; Weiner, 1985). These feelings often lead to defensive reasoning and a tendency to rationalize, ignore, or avoid the feedback (Damásio, 1994; London, 2003). Thus, despite a manager's goal for wanting to help an employee improve his or her performance, negative

feedback often falls short of this objective (Meyer, 1991). In fact, prior research has even connected negative feedback to declines in later performance ratings (Atwater & Brett, 2005). This null to negative effect may be in part due to failure feedback's decreasing an employee's self-efficacy on future job tasks (Shea & Howell, 2000). Performance may also decline because failure feedback often harms the employee's relationship with the feedback provider, typically their immediate supervisor. The negative emotions employees tend to experience when receiving negative feedback from their managers can lead to defensive action tendencies, such as an employee going into protection mode, defiantly opposing the manager, or avoiding the manager in future work interactions (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). Furthermore, people who receive negative feedback have been shown to lower their loyalty and commitment to their evaluator (Atwater, Waldman, Atwater, & Cartier, 2000) and are less likely to handle future conflicts with the evaluator with compromise and collaboration (Baron, 1988). It appears that many managers are aware of the potential costs of providing negative feedback outweighing the potential benefits, so much so that they regularly avoid, delay, or rush through the experience themselves in anticipation of employees' negative reactions (Kopelman, 1986; Napier & Latham, 1986). In summary, although negative feedback seems to be a necessary task for managers to help employees improve performance, it can oftentimes backfire and lead to no performance improvement at all or worse, poorer performance due to lower levels of employee self-efficacy and harm to the manager-subordinate relationship.

Because supplying negative feedback is an unavoidable necessary evil for managers (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005), much of the feedback literature addresses the characteristics of negative feedback that make it more amenable and thus helpful to feedback recipients. Baron (1988) notes that constructive feedback (versus destructive feedback) exhibits two key qualities –

being specific and considerate. Feedback that outlines what specific behaviors can lead to improved performance is often more accurately perceived and more accepted by employees (London, 2003), and specificity has been shown to lead to more rapid improvement in job performance (Ammons, 1956). Being considerate while giving negative feedback helps express a manager's positive regard for the employee, which helps preserve an employee's positive attitude about a feedback session. When managers are acting respectfully, it is easier for employees to feel that the feedback is honest and valuable, which in turn helps to improve performance (Atwater et al., 2000; Goodstone & Diamante, 1998).

One helpful rubric for ensuring that negative feedback is both considerate and specific is to be focused on task characteristics versus personal characteristics of the employee (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). According to Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention theory (FIT), feedback centered on the task, not on the employee's sense of self, and linked back to the employee's goals help improve future performance by helping avoid strong negative affective reactions from the employee that can interfere with task performance. Also, feedback that is focused on personal characteristics of the employee diverts considerable cognitive resources towards examining the way individuals view themselves away from the task, decreasing performance (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). Thus, reminding employees of the job-relatedness of feedback by focusing on specific task behaviors instead of the employee's personal traits helps decrease employee defensiveness to negative feedback (Silverman, 1991) and the misallocation of cognitive resources away from task performance (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). Lastly, other scholars have also described high-quality feedback as accurate and timely, such that employees have some reasonable time to be able to act on the feedback to actually improve their performance

(Ashford, 1989; Lindsley, Brass, & Thomas, 1995) and objective, such that feedback is seen as fair and coming from a credible source (Albright & Levy, 1995; Kopelman, 1986)

Although the feedback literature provides us with many warning signs for the potentially harmful impact of negative job performance feedback on employees and helpful managerial guidelines for how to minimize these negative effects, it is unclear how negative feedback impacts employees' discretionary behavior. While we know that varying strategies of giving high-quality negative job performance feedback can lead to different levels of success in helping employees improve their job performance, there is no prior research that explores whether these strategies engender the same success when used for turning down employee voice. Employees are in essence required to work on their job performance in order to maintain good standing with the organization, so negative job performance feedback, even if not accepted or heeded by the employee, will likely not prevent the employee from continuing to do their job. Employee voice, on the other hand, by definition is not an outright requirement by managers. Because employees can choose whether or not to partake in voice behavior without negative consequences, negative voice feedback may alter behavior in a different way than the negative job performance feedback outlines; specifically, negative voice feedback may lead to the employee ceasing the behavior completely and never wanting to voice again to that manager. This may seem like an extreme negative reaction, but the prior research on voice that shows high levels of idea withholding within organizations (Milliken et al., 2003) gives credence to the possibility that this reaction may occur more frequently than managers think. Thus, in a way, there is more at stake when managers provide negative feedback to employee voice versus to employee job performance – while employees still have to continue doing their work despite feeling negative emotions as noted above and remain open to receiving performance feedback again in the future, employees can choose to withhold their ideas in the

future to avoid voice feedback experiences. Because of this important distinction between job performance and discretionary behavior not addressed in the feedback literature, this research seeks to clarify how negative feedback to voice impacts subsequent employee voice behavior.

Review of Relevant Justice Research

Another literature that can shed light on the proposed research questions around how managerial voice rejection impacts employee attitudes and behaviors is the interactional justice literature, which looks at perceptions of fairness around "the propriety of the decision maker's behavior during the enactment of procedures" (Bies & Shapiro, 1987). Researchers in this area have demonstrated that people are not just concerned with the fairness of an outcome or the procedures used to get to that outcome, but also with how they are treated interpersonally during the process (Bies & Shapiro, 1987; T. Tyler & Bies, 1990). There are norms around how people should be truthful and respectful in communications, so violating these norms can lead to a sense of interactional injustice (Bies & Moag, 1986). On the other hand, acting interpersonally sensitive, which is described in the justice literature as attending to the other person's needs, rights, and feelings, helps maintain a sense of interactional justice (Bies, 2001; Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998; Mikula, Petri, & Tanzer, 1990). Thus, this literature confirms that it is important not only to consider what managers say during a voice rejection conversation, but also how it is said to achieve the best possible future outcomes.

Preserving an employee's interactional justice is critical for managers wanting to foster employee voice because it helps employees maintain a willingness to speak up and help the organization (Takeuchi, Chen, & Cheung, 2012). When justice is violated, research seems to show that employees will be less likely to engage in voice. For example, prior research has shown that unfairness triggers an individual self-identity (versus an interdependent self-identity) that can

make employees feel less motivated to engage in citizenship behaviors that benefit the group (Johnson, Chang, & Rosen, 2010; Johnson & Lord, 2010). This research also demonstrates that unfairness prompts employees to have more of a prevention regulatory focus, which emphasizes minimizing threats such as social rejection and thus decreases the likelihood of employees engaging in risky yet potentially beneficial behaviors such as voice (Johnson et al., 2010). Furthermore, other research shows that victims of perceived injustice sometimes even seek revenge against the person who treated them unfairly, especially if the victims are low status (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001). To avoid these potentially negative shifts in employee motivation and behaviors, managers should take special care not to violate employees' interactional justice when turning down employee voice.

A specific tool outlined in the interactional justice literature that is useful in helping address perceptions of injustice is social accounts, which are the explanations managers give for decisions that are seen as negative (e.g., Bies, 1987; Cobb & Wooten, 1998). Looking closer at this research can also be insightful for thinking about effective strategies of how managers can turn down employee voice. For example, this literature would suggest that managers always provide some form of justification for turning down employee voice since people actually expect some sort of social account after being communicated an unfavorable outcome such as voice rejection (Bies, 1987). The absence of any account can actually do more harm than the initial rejection itself in terms of violating the person's sense of justice (Bies, 1987). Providing an adequate social account also helps mitigate negative fallout from an unfavorable decision because they help reduce perceived responsibility of any wrongdoing, with one meta-analysis showing that individuals who were provided an adequate explanation were 43% less likely to retaliate post-decision (Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003). This effect may be due to certain types of accounts, particularly those

that include the mitigating circumstances around an unfavorable decision, lowering the intensity of negative emotions post-decision that drive the motivation to retaliate (Bies, 1987; Folger, Rosenfield, & Robinson, 1983). Managers may also benefit from providing a social account that frames the decision as outside of their control because externally justified decisions are more tolerated than decisions solely attributed to the manager (Kelley, 1973). However, there are negative trade-offs to managers minimizing their responsibility in an unfavorable decision. Bobocel, Agar, Meyer, and Irving (1998) showed that social accounts that minimized managerial responsibility, while having a positive effect on interactional fairness perceptions, adversely effected perceptions around the manager's power and leadership abilities. This is an important outcome to consider in the realm of voice because having lower perceptions of a manager's leadership and power could play into one of the top reasons for employees not voicing, a sense of futility (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Despite the scholarship around interactional justice and social accounts, there are still questions that remain unanswered regarding voice rejection. For instance, the specifics around acting interpersonally sensitive or providing an "adequate" enough explanation to maintain an employee's sense of justice are still unclear. While Shapiro, Buttner, and Barry (1994) describe an adequate decision as having specific reasons for making a decision and exhibiting sensitivity to the other party, there is no guidance on what types of specific reasons could potentially have more of a beneficial or harmful effect on employees. Also, other than steering managers to act respectfully towards employees, there is less specific information outlined by prior research on how to communicate social account information to minimize the negative impact of an unfavorable decision. Lastly, the interactional justice literature has focused more on the short-term outcomes, such as the initial reactions to unfavorable outcomes and the motivation to retaliate post-decision,

rather than the long-term and potentially cumulative consequences of specific justice strategies on future employee attitudes and behaviors, such as voice. As Bobocel et al., (1998) demonstrated, while some types of social accounts might seem to be an effective choice initially in terms of preserving justice perceptions, they could have other secondary effects that decrease an employee's willingness to speak up to their managers in the future. So, while this research provides a great starting point to understand the impact of various types of voice rejection on employees, there is still much more to learn around the specifics of how to turn down employee voice in the most effective way.

Summary

How a manager rejected an employee's previous ideas is likely an important consideration when employees make the decision to speak up again in the future. However, even with all of the research on antecedents of voice, voice rejections remain an underexplored topic. Research on negative feedback and interactional justice provides some hints for how managers should handle the sensitive task of relaying negative information when turning down ideas, but it mostly boils down to the general ideas of being respectful and specific. Beyond those guidelines, it is still unclear how managers can turn down employee voice in a way that does not discourage them from speaking up again in the future, especially since voice is a discretionary behavior and unlike job performance feedback, it is not required of employees to engage in the behavior again after receiving a rejection. Thus, even with a review of the voice research and other relevant literatures, there still seems to be much to learn about how managers reject ideas.

Because the question of how managerial rejection of voice impacts subsequent employee voice behavior remains, I plan to explore this in my dissertation with a series of two studies. In my first study, I use qualitative interviews with managers to identify and categorize the wide range

of rejection tactics used when turning down ideas. I also identify major managerial concerns during the voice rejection process that influence which rejection tactics they choose for employees. Based on my results from Study 1, I draw from various theories relevant to voice rejection to form predictions about how specific rejection strategies differentially impact employees and their future voice behavior. These hypotheses are then outlined for testing in Study 2, which is a lab experiment.

Chapter 3: Study 1 – Grounded Discovery of Managerial Idea Rejection Tactics

In Study 1, I used a qualitative approach to explore managerial rejection. More specifically, I examined the various strategies that managers employ when turning down employee voice, why they make that particular strategic choice, and their perceived impact of the rejection method on the employee to systematically identify specific characteristics of different rejection strategies. I used a qualitative approach because prior research has not yet outlined a typology of voice rejection strategies or examined how different rejection strategies impact employees' subsequent voice behavior. While we know that varying strategies of giving negative job performance feedback lead to different levels of success in helping employees improve their performance, how negative managerial feedback impacts discretionary behaviors such as voice from employees is not yet understood. Also, while some research suggests that providing a specific reason for rejecting the idea in an interpersonally sensitive way would lessen the sting of getting an idea turned down, it is still unclear what type or amount of information should be included in the manager's explanation to help best minimize potentially negative outcomes. With many unanswered questions regarding managerial rejection, it is difficult to precisely predict how employees will respond via their future voice efforts (or lack thereof). Thus, I began this research with a qualitative study that uses richly descriptive interview data on various instances of managerial voice rejection to increase our understanding.

Methods

Preliminary interview sample. This study was conducted using a mixed sample of working professionals. The first subset of participants of 10 individuals were high-level managers at a technology services organization in the Southwest. To maximize the likelihood of identifying

diverse ways in which managers turn down employee ideas within this one organization, participants were selected from nine different departments. On average, this sample had been working in their current managerial role for three years and had eleven years of total managerial work experience.

To help ensure that my findings were not idiosyncratic to a single organization or industry, I also recruited a second sample from a broader range of firms. This next subset of 11 participants were executive MBA students at a Southwestern university who concurrently were employed as high-level managers in organizations from a wide variety of industries, including accounting, consumer products, media, and public policy. On average, this sample had been working in their current managerial role for four years and had eleven years of total managerial work experience.

Lastly, I recruited a third sample of 17 MBA students at a Southwestern university to provide me with an employee perspective on idea rejection as supplemental evidence to the above managerial samples. On average, this employee sample had been working in their current organization for three years. Sampling from both the manager and the employee side of the phenomenon helps to make the qualitative study results more robust.

Data collection. I conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant using a standard interview protocol as a starting point (see Appendix A). For managers, the first set of interview questions prompted an open-ended discussion about one's managerial work responsibilities and how the manager went about encouraging his or her employees to speak up with suggestions. Participants were then asked to describe a specific example in which the manager had turned down an employee's idea when voiced. Managers were asked about what the idea was, what their initial reaction was, how they ultimately turned down the idea, and how they felt the employee responded to the idea rejection. Managers were also asked about how their

methods for communicating idea rejection may have changed as they gained managerial experience. Similarly, for employees, participants were first asked about their current job, their work responsibilities, and their working relationship with their manager. Then they were asked to describe a specific voice rejection episode in which they had brought an idea to their manager and had it turned down. Employees were probed to provide specific details about how the manager turned the idea down and if the manager's idea rejection influenced their subsequent behavior at work.

While this general outline was followed for the interviews, I also freely explored emergent issues in the interview (Spradley, 1979), such as what managerial tactics employees thought would have been more helpful. In total, 52 distinct voice rejection episodes were captured in the 38 interviews. Interviews lasted between 30 and 75 minutes, and 31 of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Detailed notes were also taken during each session by the author for analysis.

Data Analysis

Completed analysis. To analyze the interviews, I engaged in a multistep inductive process to build my understanding of the wide range of strategies managers can employ when turning down an employee's idea (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I first read through all of the interview notes iteratively to generate a list of codes present in the data following the open coding method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These first order codes, which are listed in Table 1, were then analyzed further using axial and selective coding (Locke, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), whereby codes are categorized into emerging themes. From the coded data, four different dimensions of managerial rejection strategies emerged, to be discussed in depth below. Figure 2 illustrates how the first order codes aligned with the four second-order rejection strategy codes in the data. Although the

initial purpose of this study was to uncover the different ways in which managers turned down ideas, two themes emerged around the different goals managers were trying to achieve during these voice rejection conversations. As these four dimensions and two overarching managerial rejection goals were developed and refined, I continued to go back to the data to verify that it fit with the actual participants' recall of the voice rejection episodes, until theoretical saturation was reached (Locke, 2001).

Findings

The primary findings of this study speak to the various ways in which managers turn down employee voice. While there were numerous different ways in which I documented ideas getting turned down by managers, the interview data analysis revealed four main dimensions that differentiate idea rejections: *rejection totality, diagnosticity, interpersonal sensitivity, and bilateral inquiry.* Managers seemed to describe using an approach to turning down ideas that was high or low on each of these given dimensions, and employee interviews provided corroborating evidence of these dimensions. The four key dimensions of managerial rejection strategies are listed in Table 2 with examples. Furthermore, the interview data indicated that managers tend to focus on two main goals that they hope to accomplish during the voice rejection episode: relationship preservation and employee coaching. All of the managers seemed to be aware that how they turned down employee voice could impact their relationships with their subordinates, so most at least tried to pursue rejection strategies that helped preserve the relationships with their voicing employees. Maintaining the relationship was pertinent for managers who wanted to encourage employees to speak up to them again in the future (i.e., increase voice frequency). Many managers also saw the voice rejection episode as an important coaching opportunity for employees, so these managers tended to use rejection strategies that emphasized an employees'

learning. Coaching employees about how to properly shape and vet their ideas before speaking up was important for managers who wanted their employees to voice better ideas in the future (i.e., increase voice quality). Employees provided additional evidence that rejection strategies impacted their future voice effort in terms of frequency and idea quality. After managers described their use of a particular rejection strategy in a way that was high or low along the four specified dimensions, they often connected their strategy choice with helping or hurting them achieve either of these two managerial goals that correspond to the subsequent voice outcomes of frequency and quality. Thus, in my general model, I show that each of these four dimensions impact future voice frequency and future voice quality, which relate to the managerial goals of relationship preservation and employee coaching respectively. This general model is depicted in Figure 1.

Rejection totality. The first managerial rejection strategy dimension that emerged is rejection totality, the extent to which the managerial rejection of the idea is complete and definitive. In more laymen's terms, managers vary in how "hard" their no is to employees' ideas. While some managers liked to be very clear and definitive with the employee in their decision to not support the idea and all of its components (high rejection totality), other managers enacted their rejection more tentatively (low rejection totality). High rejection totality rejections are characterized by unambiguous language that the idea is being turned down in its entirety. Managers with high rejection totality rejections described themselves as "stern and firm" (8M) and clear about the rejection (12M) to ensure that the idea is "shut down" definitively (3M). For example, one manager (20M) commented that he "didn't feel like [the employee's suggestion] was a good idea. So I chose to disregard their ideas… told them no, you have to do it." Managers using rejection strategies with high totality often emphasized the importance of being "clear in the answer" so employees know to drop the idea (11M).

In contrast, managers whose idea rejections had low rejection totality purposely avoided giving a hard no (5M, 12M, 17M). In fact, some of the participating managers had trouble even remembering an example of an idea they turned down decisively and completely, with one noting: "I'm just trying to think of an event that was like, 'I really want to do this.' And I was like, 'No. You can't do that.' I rarely ever do anything like that" (6). One way in which managers avoided the hard no despite their initial aversion to an idea was by giving some form of partial validation. For example, managers often allowed their employees to conduct a pilot study with some part of the idea (6M, 8M, 14M). This manager described the strategy in this way: "They really wanted to do it. So we didn't say no. We said, 'Sure. Let's try it. Let's pilot it in a small, limited scope and see how it – we're going to AB test it and see how it goes" (6M). Partial validation could also take the form of a manager redirecting the idea in a way that still preserves key elements of the employee's original idea but also falls more in line with the manager's thinking. A manager noted, "I kinda try to pivot off of it to make it seem like I'm building off of the idea but really I'm kind of presenting a different one because I try to avoid any level of negativity" (17M). In addition, managers who noted that they themselves could not move forward with an idea still sometimes showed partial support by approving the employee's further exploration of the idea on their own. For example, one manager noted: "We didn't so much as turn it down… I didn't see any value in stopping him from pursuing it and kind of digging in a little deeper" (5M). Oftentimes this was a way for the manager to gauge how strongly an employee felt about the idea while also signaling his or her managerial disapproval of the idea subtly. A manager told her subordinate the following:

> At this time, I have to budget my time. And so it's been one of those ones that I've said to them, "Yes, that's important. If you have the time to come up with recommendations and

move that one forward, please do so."… I'd push back to say, "Take it and work it if you feel it's a priority. (9M)

Lastly, I found that many of these managers used time as a means to keep the managerial endorsement decision more open-ended, partially validating the employee. For example, some managers noted how they would withhold their initial negative judgement on the idea so as to give more time for the idea to develop before making a final judgment (5M, 10M, 11M, 12M, 15M, 19M, 18M). As an example, Manager 11 noted to an employee: "sorry we need to move on and put it on the list and then let's come back to it." Other managers would indicate to the employee that this idea, though not appropriate at the time, could have potential in the future and thus should be "tabled" for another time (2M, 5M, 10M, 13M, 14M, 18M). As one employee described it, "it would be almost like just kicking the can down the road" (6E). Managers who frequently turned down ideas with low rejection totality mentioned their belief that avoiding a hard no and giving a more open-ended response allowed them to soften the blow of negative idea feedback for their employees. This manager (21M) described the strategy like this: "What I try to do is figure out what is the issue that they are really getting at, and address that… You're kind of validating a part of it." Although some of these examples might seem like endorsement from the manager, receiving this kind of idea feedback is distinct from receiving a full resounding "yes" because parts of the employee's idea are ignored, altered, or postponed.

Employees described several examples of conversations that varied along this dimension; some managers completely rejected the employee's idea (high rejection totality) and "automatically [said] 'no'" (14E) while others provided more tentative feedback or even some leeway to explore part of the idea further (low rejection totality). On high rejection totality, one employee described how her manager "squashed the idea" she presented in a group setting

immediately; the manager then further cemented the rejection by meeting with her in private to express criticism again. Afterwards, this employee said she felt "upset" and "afraid of saying anything and feeling rejected again," and indeed she "never brought up a new strategy" again for the rest of her tenure at that organization (5E). On low rejection totality, Employee 8 noted how sometimes his manager would reject the idea by expressing that it would "not [be] something [she's] driving," but he had some discretion "to see if it works and let [her] know." He thought that her rejection approach of pointing to parts of the idea that he could "take it and run with it" "[worked] really well," while he described being told an "outright no" as "the worst way" to handle employee voice. This employee emphasized that he continues to bring up ideas to his manager despite having several rejected and failed previous ideas. These examples highlight the significance of this dimension on future employee voice.

Diagnosticity. The second recurring managerial rejection strategy dimension is diagnosticity, defined as the extent to which the rejection message provides a high quantity of specific pieces of information on why the idea is not being supported. When providing negative idea feedback to their employees, managers have a choice on how much information they will provide the employee and how specific their comments will be on why the idea is being turned down. Many managers made it a point to provide the employee with multiple reasons behind the rejection decision (high diagnosticity, 6M, 9M, 13M, 14M, 18M, 19M, 20M, 21M). These managers seemed to feel that giving a reason was an important part of the idea rejection process. For example, one manager noted: "If you had to say no, you don't say, 'No.' You say why maybe this might not work or why we couldn't do that right now" (6M), while another commented that he "always tried to provide perspective instead of just saying, 'Hey, that's not gonna work'" (16M). Managers who typically followed a strategy high on diagnosticity tended to emphasize the

importance of transparency and honesty with their subordinates around their decision-making when the communication was "difficult" such as in an idea rejection conversation (9M). In a way, providing specific justifications for not endorsing the idea allowed managers to avoid sending an inadvertent message to the employee that this was more of a personal rejection. One manager described it as such: "I think when you're open and honest and transparent and objective about these things, it's not – it's the merit of the idea and open – honestly, saying what's possible. It's not, "Well, I don't like that person so I'm going to say no to their idea" (6M).

Managers who practiced idea rejection with high diagnosticity often described the voice rejection conversation as an opportunity to educate their employees about the various organizational and implementation constraints that prevent their idea from getting managerial support (20M). During the rejection conversation, these managers tried to give specific feedback on the idea that imparted their unique managerial knowledge about the organization to the employee. One manager described the goal as "helping someone see things from all the different kind of aspects of the organization" (19M). Another manager similarly noted:

> I always try to provide feedback with *very specific* context about thinking about well what's the culture of the organization, what's the behavioral change that we are trying to drive in the organization, and how is this going to help to push that forward? You know let's anticipate, what are the bumps in the road that we might hit and try to find different ways around that, different ways to word things, or different ways to frame things when we present those ideas to a broader community where it's internally or externally the client's… So, that's generally my approach. I always try to wrap it into some level of context and get them kind of seeing the bigger picture… I think they can be most effective when they understand the context of where the company is going, what are the organizational strategic

> decisions being made by leadership, and things like that. So they can wrap their behavior around that. (17M)

In effect, these managers coach their employees on what kinds of ideas are more endorsable in the organization when they provide highly diagnostic negative idea feedback that enhances their employees' understanding of the organization's goals, priorities, and constraints.

Some managers, on the other hand, purposely gave idea feedback with little to no specific information as to why (low diagnosticity, 3M, 9M). One manager said: "I just want to make the decisions and move on" (4M), while another mentioned that "you sometimes have to say, 'You just have to do it this way'" (16M). Providing less specific information allowed managers to nip ideas in the bud quickly without spending a lot of their time going back and forth with the employee on the idea's specifics. Not providing much information as to why the idea was being rejected also reinforced a more formal manager-subordinate relationship in the workplace (9M).

The employee data also provided evidence of managers' use of low and high diagnosticity rejections. One example of a low diagnostic rejection conversation came from an employee who described a prior manager as rejecting the idea by saying, "'well, in my 40 years of practicing law, we've always done it this way'" (8E), despite the idea having merit. He expressed gratitude for not having to work with that manager anymore and avoiding "that kind of ideology from my [new] managers." In another example, Employee 16 described his manager in the following way: "this manager, no matter how busy he is...[will] let me know what my priorities are… what his bosses want from him and what he's on the hook for so that I don't feel like he's just saying, 'Hey, stop doing this and do this,'… without giving me reason." This comment not only reflects the type of information that managers can share during a rejection conversation but also highlights how receiving multiple pieces of information along with the rejection can be helpful to employees. Not

providing enough "direction" (8E) or "logical reasons" (5E) for the rejection seemed to influence what employees learned from the rejection conversation. Without facts to "back [a rejection] up," Employee 5 noted how employees would bring up an idea again without any changes that made it more feasible, lamenting that the bad "idea never died." These examples seem to highlight that diagnosticity leads to positive employee reactions. However, Employee 15 gave a voice example that highlights how diagnosticity can be a double-edged sword. While her manager's high diagnosticity rejection allowed her to "gain some more insight into… some of the challenges that [she] might not have been aware of previously," during the rejection conversation she described how it "just [came] across like excuses in the moment." After the rejection, she became more hesitant to "put [herself] out there again… because it [didn't] seem like the will is there to respond," suggesting that high diagnosticity can negatively affect future employee voice.

This dimension that came from my interview data has also been deemed significant from past research on feedback. Prior research on job performance feedback has highlighted how being specific makes a difference in whether feedback is seen as constructive or destructive by the feedback recipient (Baron, 1988). In addition, specific feedback is often more readily accepted and more accurately perceived by employees than general, non-diagnostic feedback (London, 2003). However, while much of the feedback literature paints high diagnosticity as a desirable attribute of negative feedback, my qualitative data also highlights that there may be potential benefits to low diagnosticity voice rejections. It appears likely that there are specific instances for which turning down ideas in a less diagnostic way may be preferred by both managers and employees.

Interpersonal sensitivity. The third dimension in which managerial rejection strategies varied is interpersonal sensitivity, or the extent to which managers act respectfully of their voicing

employee during the idea conversation. Although almost all of the managers in this study noted the importance of turning ideas down in a respectful fashion, many of them could recount times when they had failed to do so with their own employees. A manager that is turning down an idea with a high level of interpersonal sensitivity still makes the employee feel listened to and acknowledged (3M, 16M, 20M) by showing authentic interest (4M, 13M), empathy (7M, 8M), and an open mind (12M). Managers acting in a highly interpersonally sensitive way oftentimes acknowledge the employees' efforts in speaking up, despite the idea having many faults. For example, one manager commented: "I think it's always great, if you decide not to use it or take the idea forward, is to acknowledge the effort and appreciation for the thinking… my approach is… respectful of the person and their ideas" (2M). Even if an employee is having trouble verbalizing the idea effectively or the idea itself is extremely impractical, managers mentioned "taking them seriously" (4M), "[giving] people the benefit of the doubt" (4M), and keeping comments "that flat out [will] hurt somebody's feelings… to [themselves]" (15M). Managers acknowledged that providing rejection feedback often warranted a "delicate" (6M) conversation that took a significant amount of time so that the employee did not leave feeling disparaged or "downgraded" (20M). A manager noted: "you have to spend time to explain to people why you cannot do their idea… You have to deal with them as a human" (13M). Another manager summarized the high interpersonally sensitive rejection dimension well:

> It's not just that because you couldn't implement the idea, but you still recognize the part that they actually came up with the idea, because in a lot of these situations it's not necessarily just that my idea got implemented or didn't get implemented. It's about did I listen to the idea? Did I provide it a fair opportunity to present and have the conversation and did I just stomp it down? (11M)

These managers placed an emphasis on ensuring that despite receiving negative feedback about their idea, employees left the conversation feeling positive about their managerial interaction due to being treated respectfully and kindly. Manager 13 noted that you treat them nicely "so they leave the office thinking, [my manager] did everything possible to make it happen. [He] did everything he can to consider my thoughts. So I feel valued. So I'm worth it. That's what matters. Not just the decision."

As mentioned above, many managers did open up about turning down ideas in an interpersonally *insensitive* way, especially when they first started out as managers. Rejection conversations in which managers act with low interpersonal sensitivity oftentimes are "very to the point, very direct, not a lot of emotion behind it, and it's not a lot of nurturing" (16M). Managers using this kind of tactic seemed to focus more on making the right decision for the organization versus making a decision that prioritized employee well-being. For example, one manager said: "For me it's less about 'Am I going to hurt anybody's feelings' and more about, just, 'I want to make the right decision'" (2M). Another manager commented how the organization was "not a democracy" and "it's a business decision" (4M) to not endorse certain ideas. With this tactic, managers can sometimes come off as "closeminded" (3M), "condescending" (12M), "hard to connect with… [and] standoffish" (7E), which gives the impression that they are not taking the employee's idea seriously and that they are not as concerned with the employee's feelings. Rather than be oblivious to this, they seemed to acknowledge and accept that sometimes this would create some discord with their employees, with manager 20 noting: "you just have to understand that they they're not going to like it." As another manager described it, "I tend to walk into a room feeling like I'm the smartest person in the room… [So I] said, you know what, this is not a good idea, we're not gonna do it. End of story" (3M). At an extremely low level of interpersonal sensitivity,

managers seem to not differentiate the negatives of the idea from the employee and thus act critically towards both, which can devolve into unkind name-calling. One manager gave an example feedback line of, "that's a terrible idea, you're just an idiot" (21M). While managers both high and low on the interpersonal sensitivity rejection dimension seem to agree that how negative idea feedback is delivered has an impact on employees' feelings, they seem to disagree on how much value to place on protecting those feelings.

Several employees commented on how their managers' interpersonal *insensitivity* during the rejection conversation affected them immediately and in the long-term. For example, one employee described how her manager "didn't seem to be very supportive" during the conversation; she said, "I felt like he kind of switched to defensiveness and wasn't really listening to what I was saying… it felt like… he didn't actually care" (14E). Overall, this employee felt discouraged at how the conversation went, and she expressed how it affected her choice to withhold ideas afterwards due to the feeling that she had to use her voice "cards sparingly" with this supervisor. Another employee lamented how his manager's lack of sensitivity during a few voice rejection conversations affected him negatively at work. Because his manager "wasn't empathizing" and making him feel "cared for" and instead was "patronizing" and "treated [him] like a little kid" during idea rejections, this employee started to "feel an apathy and an indifference to the work" (7E), which was reflected by a decrease in work ethic and voicing. Unfortunately for his manager and work organization, his reaction to his managers insensitive rejections was to "[stop] vouching for so much change." Although some employees did highlight the positive effects of their managers' interpersonally sensitive rejections (6E, 15E, 16E), with Employee 6 noting how he appreciated that "even if suggestions were not actionable, they were always at least heard," more employees commented on this dimension at low or neutral levels when prompted for a salient

rejection conversation. This suggests that employees may expect a certain level of sensitivity from their managers as a baseline when they take the risk to voice, and more often it is when these expectations are violated with a low interpersonal sensitivity rejection that an employee's relationship with their supervisor and future voicing behaviors are affected negatively.

The concept of interpersonal sensitivity from my interview data can be connected to past research on feedback and interactional justice. Prior research on job performance feedback has highlighted how being considerate while giving negative feedback demonstrates a managers' positive regard for the employee, making it easier for the employee to find the feedback honest, valuable, and in general constructive for improving performance (Atwater et al., 2000; Baron, 1988; Goodstone & Diamante, 1998). Also, justice scholars have noted that acting interpersonally sensitive can help employee's maintain a sense of interactional justice (Bies, 2001; Donovan et al., 1998; Mikula et al., 1990), despite not getting a preferred positive outcome. Overall, my findings on interpersonal sensitivity, in addition to these other literatures, suggest that people are not just concerned with the outcome of speaking up (i.e., whether their idea is supported or rejected) but also with how their manager treats them during the process.

Bilateral inquiry. The final dimension that distinguished managerial rejection strategies from each other is the degree of bilateral inquiry. This dimension is defined as the extent to which the manager includes the employee in the conversation and decision-making reasoning during the voice rejection episode. Managers that reject ideas with high bilateral inquiry garner greater participation from their employees by asking them questions in a way that help guide the employees to their own idea rejection. Low bilateral inquiry rejections are characterized by managers that unilaterally run the voice rejection conversation on their own and strictly rely on their own judgement to make a decision about the idea, without soliciting dialogue from the

employee. Low bilateral inquiry rejections oftentimes feature managers monologuing at employees about their non-endorsement decision.

For the former, managers with high bilateral inquiry in their idea rejection acted more collaboratively with the employee when deciding the next direction for the idea. In particular, many would ask the employee open-ended questions about idea (7M, 15M, 16M, 17M, 21M) to guide the employee into making the ultimate decision to support or turn down the idea. Rather than being too directive, questions were adeptly used as a way to help the employee discover the idea's faults (15M, 17M, 21M, 14E) and even redirect the employee towards a better idea that the manager and employee came up with together during the conversation (3M, 9M, 13M). One manager described it as "idea jiu-jitsu," which meant "working with the person to realign what they're thinking, if I think [the idea]'s completely off base" (6M). Examples of managerial questions included items such as: "If we did that approach, could we do x, y, and z?" (6M); "What is the benefit of this? Can this get big?... Is this the best thing to do at this time" (11M)? Allowing employees to answer these questions in a conversation was meant to "walk them down slowly" (13M) from their own idea by gently highlighting gaps in their thinking around the issue.

The key to utilizing a high degree of bilateral inquiry is to try and suspend judgment so as not to impose a managerial rejection decision on the employee before the employee can come to that conclusion him/herself. As manager 11 put it: "You let the idea owner participate…You're more of a scribe there, you're not the one directing that conversation." These managers strongly believed that this kind of tactic led to better outcomes in terms of how employees responded to negative voice feedback. For example, manager 13 noted: you help them "find it on their own, even if it takes longer, because it will be *their* plan." Manager 12 summed up the goal of the approach well:

> I want them to come to a conclusion in which they agree with me that there's a big issue with it. If the employee reaches an agreed state with their manager, it's much better than having it be the other way. That's why. There's no undercurrent of conflict that starts to bubble up and can create much bigger problems.

On the other hand, managers who used less bilateral inquiry tended to make rejection decisions with a top-down, command and control (6M), authoritarian (18M) fashion that placed less value or emphasis on others' perspectives. These managers were much more directive about how the employee should proceed with the idea (14M, 15M, 17M) despite their use of only their own personal reasoning. If a manager had tried a similar idea in the past and failed, they were quick to turn down the idea for that reason, noting "I've done that, tried that, been there, done that; and it doesn't work" (8M). One manager labeled this type of managerial rejection as making a managerial "edict" (8M), while others described it as a display of "the manager knows best" mentality (3M, 20M). This manager commented: "When I was younger I thought I knew everything, there's only one way to do everything… I would try to convince them that my way was right" (20M). Rejection strategies characterized by low bilateral inquiry tended to be more time efficient for managers when turning down ideas. Also, these kinds of strategies were often used on extremely persistent and unrelenting employees to clearly provide idea direction. For example, a manager said: "Sometimes you just hit a wall with somebody and it's kinda like, 'Okay, well this is what we should do'" (17M). The quote below helps to clarify further the difference between high and low bilateral inquiry from a manager's perspective:

> When you're in inquiry you are asking more open ended questions and getting the other person to really think through it and start to solve the problem themselves and come to the conclusion themselves. Whereas if you are in inquisition you're either giving the answer

or you're just more aggressive as far as defining what the person should do…I think in the best cases it's I ask questions that guide them to the solution or get them to see that context that I was talking about earlier. (17M)

Several employees expressed awareness of the managerial rejection strategy of high bilateral inquiry, and they generally seemed to find the approach helpful. For example, Employee 14 said, "if I bring something up and [my manager] doesn't agree with me, I can tell that she'll ask questions." This employee noted that this type of rejection strategy helped her "[learn] more of how to work with her [manager] and how [to work better] – even within [the] company." Another employee mentioned that when his manager expressed his rejection with a "let's talk about this, let me ask you questions" approach, he "felt really good about it afterwards" (15E). Even though his idea had been rejected, he still felt his manager was "welcome" to new ideas, and his relationship with his manager stayed "very friendly." There were also examples of rejection conversations in which employees were not actively involved in a dialogue with their managers after the initial idea pitch. An employee described her rejection conversation of low bilateral inquiry as such: "there was no back and forth about 'Wait? What did you do with this part and how does this work?' There was nothing like that" (16E). My data from employees seems to suggest that a lack of bilateral inquiry in a "one-sided" (6E) rejection conversation can "make [employees] feel like [they don't] really have a voice" (16E) or even like "they're no longer having a conversation" (6E) at all, which is "disappointing," "frustrating" (16E), and likely to affect any future decisions to speak up again. On the other hand, maintaining a "back-and-forth kind of relationship" (15E) during a rejection conversation may lead to positive relational and learning outcomes for employees.

Author notes on dimensions. First, because these four dimensions of managerial rejection may seem to correspond with categories of organizational justice at first glance, I want to highlight

important distinctions between the types of justice and the concepts I drew out from the qualitative data in order to justify having a separate taxonomy for idea rejection. Generally, justice relates to people's perceptions of fairness in the organization (Greenberg, 1987) and more specifically, the perceived adherence to appropriateness rules around decisions (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015). My interview data reveals a few important points. First, organizations do not typically specify formal procedures or rules for the process of rejecting employees' ideas, which limits how universally a rejection can be deemed as inappropriate. Indeed both managers and employees can vary dramatically on what they believe makes for a reasonable idea rejection. Secondly, many of the justice dimensions are concerned with how a decision is made and the procedures followed to get to that decision. My rejection dimensions on the other hand are more so concerned with how a rejection decision is communicated after a manager has already decided to reject the idea. Thus, the considerations that are oftentimes involved with the different dimensions of organizational justice are not as significant in terms of their impact on employee responses to idea rejection.

For example, rejection totality may seem to relate to distributive justice, the perceived fairness of decision outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2013), because it involves more or less of a favorable outcome (in this context, idea endorsement). However, distributive justice often involves a determination of equity and whether the outcomes correspond fairly with an employee's inputs, especially in comparison to other employees' outputs and inputs (Adams, 1965). Rejection totality not only excludes comparison with others, it also does not factor in how much an employee has invested in their idea. Rather, rejection totality relates to how completely and definitively a manager rejects an idea. Similarly, interpersonal sensitivity and diagnosticity are conceptually distinct from interactional and informational justice because the rejection dimensions are less concerned with attending to people's rights through proper enactment of formal decision-making

procedures through specific conditions, such as timeliness and truthfulness (Bies & Moag, 1986; Moorman, 1991; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Furthermore, diagnosticity goes beyond the most prevalent requirement for satisfying informational justice, providing an account for a negative outcome (Greenberg, 1993), by also considering how much information is provided and how specific that information is in justifying a manager's decision-making. Lastly, bilateral inquiry differs from the concept of procedural justice, which is often measured by how much a decision follows appropriate decision-making procedures such as consistency and correctability (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), because the focus of bilateral inquiry is on the employee's participation during the specific voice rejection conversation, not the procedures prior to or post-rejection decision. In summary, I believe the four rejection dimensions diverge conceptually from the organizational justice dimensions significantly enough to warrant their use.

Secondly, another observation I want to highlight about these dimensions that appeared in my data is that managers did not typically just stick to one style of idea rejection. Managers seemed to not only customize their approach based on the employee (e.g., the employee's frequency of speaking, their relationship with the manager, their performance) and the business context (e.g., how busy managers are at the time, 6M, 13- 17M, 20M), but also change their approaches over time as they gained more managerial experience and confidence (4M). This is important to note because rather than managers having a dispositional inclination to turn down ideas uniformly across all employees, my data shows that managers more often are strategically choosing how they turn down their employees' ideas in order to gain the best results from the voice conversation.

Emerging themes for managerial goals around employee outcomes. When the managers in my sample described the act of turning down employees' ideas, two specific goals

came to the surface repeatedly. The first objective managers named was interpersonal in nature – they wanted to ensure that their relationship with their employee stayed intact through the rejection conversation so that employees would not be afraid to speak up to them again in the future. Managers were well aware that having an idea rejected could be detrimental to the manager-subordinate relationship, as noted by one manager that said: "I avoid killing ideas as much as possible for that reason" (15M). Another manager commented on the importance of turning down employees' ideas in a thoughtful manner so that employees do not "feel like you don't like them personally" or that you just "keep saying no" (4M). Managers also understood that turning down an idea in an offensive fashion could severely reduce that employee's willingness to speak up again in the workplace, effectively cutting off the flow of potentially good ideas upward. Manager 8 noted: "I don't wanna shut her down. I don't want to shut down the communication."

Thus, in an effort to preserve the relationship while turning down an idea, managers highlighted the importance of acting respectful and empathetic (e.g., demonstrate high interpersonal sensitivity), giving the employee some leeway with their idea (e.g., show low rejection totality), and allowing the employee to reach the rejection decision versus telling them what to do (e.g., use high bilateral inquiry). The interviews showed a connection between managers' decision to act with high interpersonal sensitivity, low rejection totality, and high bilateral inquiry and their desire to minimize harm to the relationship. For example, one manager describing a tactic with high interpersonal sensitivity commented:

> It's a respectful discourse. But by being very open, we can have an honest discussion… it makes it much easier to keep a solid relationship moving forward because it builds trust. There is no belief that something is being hidden from the employee and I believe therefore they are generally more open with you as a manager. (9M)

In fact, some managers used the rejection conversation as a means to grow and strengthen their relationship (10M, 11M) by increasing their understanding of the employee's motivations and personal goals, despite not giving the initial idea full support. For instance, a manager commented: "I've kind of expanded it to be more of getting the goal behind why somebody communicates ideas. What is the motivation behind – why would someone want to come and talk about an idea or even present an idea?" (11M).

Employees provided corroboration that indeed their managers' rejection strategies could both harm or strengthen their relationship, which in turn influenced their willingness to continue to pitch ideas to them. Employee 9 noted how one of his previous managers handled idea rejection in an interpersonally insensitive way that left him feeling like his manager was "just a terrible person" who he no longer wanted to "[try] to do favors for" or "go above and beyond" for; instead of feeling close to his manager and encouraged to speak up again, he decided to "hold [his] ideas to [his] chest" so that he could "implement [the ideas] in a time where that person is no longer in the way." Another employee made comments about a badly received voice rejection conversation characterized by low bilateral inquiry with a previous manager at a prior accounting firm, saying: "for that to be the way that [the managing partner] responded was concerning" (13E). He recounted how it not only damaged his relationship with his manager, but also with the firm with the comment: "it was actually one of the things that caused me to end up leaving the company." This same employee described how he thought his current manager, with whom he has a "really good working relationship," handled idea rejections in a much more effective way for fostering continued voice:

> There's a lot of respect up the chain between our leaders and how they treat us. If we have ideas that we can justify in some way, shape, or form they're generally willing to listen…

> if they were completely off-putting any time we had a new, creative, off-the-wall type idea then that would really close our thinking. So, generally speaking, they're pretty open… [although] there are times when there's considerations, whether it be called big company politics or there's some kind of operational consideration that we just aren't aware of that ends up making it where the idea just won't work. (13E)

His comment highlights how managers that choose the right rejection strategies can still preserve their relationships with their employees and encourage future voice while doing the oftentimes necessary task of turning ideas down.

The second managerial goal that emerged from the data related to employee coaching. Many managers described the need to use the voice conversation as an opportunity to teach employees more about their job roles, the organization's priorities and goals, and the broader organizational system (e.g., how implementing the idea has multiple layers of potential obstacles and/or consequences; 7M, 14M). Managers were keen on shaping the conversation as a "learning experience" (14M) and took the role of being a coach to their employees quite seriously. Manager 6 described it like so: "I think one of my jobs as a manager – I'm a coach. I don't tell my team what to do… I try to help guide them and coach them" (6M). As another manager put it:

> What I try to do is educate them… I think education is the key. I continue to try to educate them on what I believe we were trying to accomplish and the reasons behind what we we're trying to accomplish and why this particular solution would not meet that end… If you have the knowledge, then you try and educate. (20M)

In addition to helping employees by building their organizational knowledge, managers also often commented on how successful coaching helps them by improving the quality of ideas that are voiced. In other words, the types of ideas that employees speak up to managers about are likely

to improve once managers "habituate [employees] on what makes a good idea" (18M) and employees incorporate that new knowledge into their thinking. Although many managers acknowledged that coaching an employee through an idea rejection was not the "easy answer" and that "it takes time to do" (21M), they found it a worthwhile endeavor because it would actually save them time and energy in the future dealing with poor ideas that could be self-filtered by employees. As one manager put it: "if you have been effective… your reasons to say no or the opportunities to say no start becoming fewer and fewer" (11M).

Similar to the above goal of relationship preservation, the goal of employee coaching was frequently intertwined with specific dimensions of managerial rejection tactics, namely diagnosticity and bilateral inquiry. Managers that prioritized coaching typically turned down ideas in a way that provided a lot of information to the employee on why the idea was being rejected (e.g., high diagnosticity) and in a way that included the employee in the decision process (e.g., high bilateral inquiry). For example, this manager described his opinion of a rejection strategy with high bilateral inquiry in this way: "my role is more of building leaders… and the best way for that is for them to come up with approaches to solving the problem as opposed to how I would solve it" (11M). These two methods allowed managers to help nurture an employee's learning about what ideas have the most potential in the workplace so that future voice attempts are improved.

There were many instances in which employees recalled rejection conversations that actually helped them learn valuable information for improving future ideas. For example, one employee recalled how his "very collaborative" (4E) manager involved him in the rejection conversation, probing him about whether the issue he brought up was a high priority problem. He

described how his manager's rejection approach encouraged a "constant state of learning" and helped him "focus on the present versus the future" (4E), which he later used to filter future ideas. Another employee whose manager coached her during rejection conversations by asking questions described her learning outcomes as such: "the way I approach ideas now is different than when I first started… [because I] understand that people have different perspectives" (14E). Her comment shows that she was able to learn from rejection and also use her learning to voice more effectively when pitching new ideas. On the other hand, one employee complained about how the lack of diagnosticity in her manager's rejection message was a missed opportunity, saying "looking back… a little more transparency in terms of the overall structure of the organization," changes in "organization-wide priorities," future hiring plans, and HR timelines would have helped and "made a little more sense" (11E). Only being informed that her HR-related idea was rejected because "this is a busy time" did not teach her much about how to improve the quality of her future ideas to achieve higher levels of managerial endorsement. To sum, employee interview data verified that depending on the rejection strategies managers choose, employee learning around what kinds of ideas are most likely to be implemented and what factors should be considered before pitching can either be encouraged or stifled.

Although these two goals seem to be complementary in how managers described their positive impact on employees' subsequent employee responses to idea rejection, I found that these two goals were often in conflict in the data. In several of the examples of voice rejection, managers seemed to have to prioritize one goal over another due to various circumstances, such as the employee's personality or the current relationship with the employee. With close examination of the data, I discovered that the way in which these two goals influence which type of rejection strategy a manager chooses can be at odds with one another, which is important since the choice

of rejection strategy understandably impacts employees' reactions. For example, a manager with a quieter employee who speaks up less frequently may be provided with less diagnostic information and more interpersonally sensitivity to encourage the individual to keep bringing up ideas without overwhelming them with knowledge about the idea's implementation barriers. For example, one manager noted: "I think there are definitely some folks that are more sensitive about [negative idea feedback] than others. I definitely try to be more delicate about that and kind of spend a lot more time – it's always like two positives for every negative when you're coaching" (6M).

Discussion

My qualitative investigation of voice rejection episodes provides a rich description of the many various ways in which managers turn down employee voice. My interview data suggests that voice rejection strategies are characterized by four dimensions (rejection totality, diagnosticity, interpersonal sensitivity, and bilateral inquiry). These dimensions appear to differentially impact whether managers achieve either one or both of two key goals they often focused on while turning down ideas: relationship preservation and employee coaching. These two goals were important to managers because they connected achievement of these goals with specific effects on employees' subsequent voice behavior. Firstly, preserving the manager-subordinate relationship during a voice rejection episode was often seen as necessary for having the employee speak up to them again in the future. Indeed, this relationship between a positive manager-subordinate relationship and increased voice frequency has been documented in prior voice research (e.g., Burris et al., 2008; Milliken et al., 2003). Secondly, managers that emphasized coaching employees about voice often noted how it could help improve the ideas that employees brought to them in the future (i.e., improve voice quality). Data from employee

interviews provide support for the influence of the rejection strategies on their future voice behavior. While much of past voice research has focused on voice frequency, my qualitative data point to voice quality as another important managerial objective for researchers to consider when noting the consequences of managerial rejections of voice. Thus, when evaluating how each dimension of managerial rejection strategies impacts future employee voice behavior, I plan to focus on future voice frequency and future voice quality as my key dependent variables.

Limitations

One limitation from my first round of managerial interviews is that most managers, when asked to describe a voice rejection episode, opted to describe one in which they handled the situation well. This meant the majority of detailed voice episode data did not entail the more negative ways in which ideas are rejected. I was able to capture this type of information, however, when I asked managers if they had changed the way they turned down ideas over their managerial career. This question prompted many managers to describe the ways in which they felt they had done a sub-optimal job rejecting ideas in the past and also to specify what they believed were some negative employee outcomes from their poor choice of rejection strategy. I also combatted this positive bias of managers by asking employees to describe rejection episodes from their perspective. It is important to note however that my data did not consist of matched pairs of employees and their managers. This means that I could only capture interview participants' perceptions of the other party in the specific rejection conversation without actually verifying it with the other source. Nevertheless, given that the same rejection themes emerged from the data on both sides of the conversation, I feel the findings accurately reflect the phenomenon of voice rejection.

Another limitation of my data is that it is difficult to tease apart the individual effects of each rejection strategy dimension with qualitative recounts of voice episodes due to the many unique combinations of dimensions coupled with managers' various perceived outcomes on their employees. For study 1, my use of qualitative methods and analysis for examining voice rejection in the environment that it naturally occurs (people's workplaces) has the benefit of constructing meaning and connections about voice rejection not primarily through the lens of myself, an outside researcher, but through the lenses of working managers and employees, making it a more interpretive and naturalistic approach than various quantitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) that emphasize the measurement and analysis of specific causal relations among variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The value of this qualitative approach is a thick, rich description of the phenomenon that allowed for my direct engagement as a researcher with real managers, employees, and their organizational realities (Gephart, 2004). However, the qualitative data is limiting for thoroughly testing causal relationships between variables, and thus, is insufficient for examining how each rejection dimension impacts an employee's future voice quantity and quality. Thus, while drawing from the findings of Study 1, I use my second study to bring in prior theoretical knowledge from the communication and learning literatures to develop and test specific hypotheses about each of the four dimensions. Testing a controlled experiment in the lab allowed me to measure the effects of each dimension on subsequent employee voice behavior with more precision in Study 2, complementing my findings from Study 1.

Chapter 4: Study 2 – Theorizing and Hypotheses

As noted above, my findings from Study 1 outline four important dimensions of managerial rejection strategies: rejection totality, diagnosticity, interpersonal sensitivity, and bilateral inquiry; and two managerial goals for idea rejection: relationship preservation and coaching. Although I included employee input on idea rejections in Study 1 and also had several managers make comments on what they believed influenced employees' responses, I use Study 2 to more explicitly assess the differential effects of these dimensions on helping managers achieve these goals. Both managers and employees emphasized the connection of these goals to future voice frequency and future voice quality. In other words, Study 1 suggests that managers enact specific rejection strategies that help to preserve the manager-subordinate relationship and coach employees about the organization in order to facilitate their employees' speaking up again in the future with even better ideas. Given managers' attention to employee future voice behavior as a consequence of their rejection strategies, I plan to also explore employees' future voice behavior, specifically future voice frequency and future voice quality, as my dependent variables for evaluating the various rejection strategy dimensions.

As noted in Chapter 3, Study 1 helped me as a researcher understand and document the breadth of rejection strategies that managers use when turning down employee voice and draw out four major dimensions of rejection for further study. Although not specifically outlined by managers in Study 1, I draw from previous theorizing and research on communication and education in order to make predictions about the effect of these managerial rejection dimensions on employees' future voice behavior. The relevance of this past research to the voice rejection phenomenon is discussed below in more detail. Furthermore, because the qualitative nature of Study 1 does not allow me to measure causal effects as precisely as a quantitative study, Study 2

used a quantitative approach that allows for direct measurement of my rejection strategy and dependent employee voice variables.

Politeness Theory

My findings from Study 1 suggest that voice frequency relies on proper manager-subordinate relationship preservation during voice rejections. Prior research on feedback and interactional justice also point to the potentially harmful effects of negative feedback and unfavorable decisions by managers on the manager-subordinate relationship (e.g., Baron, 1988; Bies, 1987). Keeping the importance of this relationship preservation in mind, I draw from politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) because it gives researchers a framework for looking at complex communications between speakers (in this case, a manager and an employee) and analyzing how damaging or preserving a conversation is for the two parties involved and their relationship (for review, see Brown, 2015). For example, Goldsmith (1992) used politeness theory to examine whether the conversations of health professionals with their patients were helpful or unhelpful to the patients and the patient-provider relationship. In general, this theory can help scholars make useful predictions about how one individual's speech strategies impact the other individual and their relationship. Thus, politeness theory is a relevant theoretical lens for exploring how the strategic choices managers make when turning down employee voice along the four aforementioned dimensions impact the employee, the manager-subordinate relationship, and subsequently, employees' future voice frequency.

To further outline why politeness theory provides a useful framework for examining voice and voice rejections, it is important to understand its major tenets. Central to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory is the notion of an individual's face, a concept first introduced to social science research by (Goffman, 1955, 1967). According to Goffman (1967), face is the desired

image one creates for oneself through social interactions with others. Analogous to the socially-defined concept of reputation (Rao, 1994), rather than face being an internal property of the individual, it is a social construct and phenomenon in that "it comes into being when one person comes into the presence of another; it is created through the communicative moves of interactants" (Tracy, 1990). Maintaining face throughout social interactions with others is highly important to individuals and an important source of social motivation because it is necessary to sustain one's self-esteem (Baumeister, 1997; Deutsch, 1961; White, Tynan, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2004). Because everyone is argued to have the need to preserve face, in general, it is in two interacting people's mutual interest to maintain each other's face and consequently, politeness norms that help preserve face can be found in cultures around the world (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face is comprised of two distinct social needs: negative face and positive face. Negative face, which sometimes is labeled by face researchers as autonomy, describes the want to act with freedom without the impediment of others. Positive face, on the other hand, refers to the want to have one's self-image be appreciated and approved by others and have one's wants be validated by others. Individuals attempt to maintain both negative and positive face during social interactions, and each type of face can be threatened separately. When a message receiver's face is threatened by a message sender's actions or use of language, this behavior is described by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a face threatening act (FTA). Both face threats and face wants are pervasive features of social life (Goldsmith, 1992). Because politeness norms emphasize avoiding FTAs, when FTAs do occur between individuals, they can evoke emotional reactions and have significant negative consequences for the individuals' relationship (Spencer-Oatey, 2007).

Specifically, FTAs signal a lack of regard for the message receiver's interests and call into question the message recipient's competence (Cupach & Messman, 1999). Goffman (1967) even described face attacks as actions that disconfirm the recipients' identities to which they are emotionally attached. Recipients of face attack often infer that the message sender disrespects them and does not value their relationship (Brett et al., 2007; Brown & Levinson, 1987), which in turn can lead to their experiencing of intense negative emotions (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Goffman, 1955). Thus, while face-affirming actions make individuals feel good about themselves and more likely to approach the relationship with the message sender further, FTAs are likely to hurt the message receiver's feelings and make them disengage from future interactions with the message sender (Cupach & Metts, 1994). The lack of consensual validation can inject tension and anxiety into the relationship, causing relationship threat and triggering more relationship conflict (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Cupach & Carson, 2002; Ren & Gray, 2009). Prior research has also noted that face threats are likely to lead to the message recipient becoming defensive and retaliatory in an attempt to regain face (Brown, 1968; Cupach & Metts, 1994; Deutsch & Krauss, 1962). In cases where the message sender and message recipient are trying to reach agreement, face threat pushes people to harden their positions, escalate conflict, and lower their willingness to cooperate – all of which contributes to a lower likelihood of coming to an agreement (Brown, 1968; Deutsch, 1961; Deutsch & Krauss, 1962; Tjosvold, 1985).

Although FTAs can lead to negative outcomes, sometimes they are necessary and unavoidable for organizations to function effectively. For example, some examples of acts that are face threatening include offering advice, giving directions, asking for a favor, and negotiating a deal (Brown & Levinson, 1987). While some actions are face threatening in absolute terms due to the nature of the act (such as directing negative emotions at a person), actions such as these

mentioned above can be interpreted as a bit less face threatening given the work context and working relationships in which they take place (Brown & Levinson, 1987). One might argue that the potential pros of FTAs such as giving feedback and critiques can outweigh the potential cons, especially since feedback is so crucial for individual and organizational learning and performance (Argyris, 1992). Nonetheless, people are quite hesitant and unwilling to engage in face threatening behavior (Colella, 2001) even at work, which perhaps can partially explain why managers oftentimes avoid giving feedback even when an employee's performance requires much improvement (Kopelman, 1986).

Voice as a FTA

Now that politeness theory has been outlined above, I argue that there is a strong benefit to examining voice through a face lens. First and foremost, it is important to recognize that the act of speaking up and offering an idea that challenges the status quo is a face threatening situation for the employee in many ways, even *before* the manager responds. To start with, because an employee is seeking approval from a manager for his or her idea, positive face is under threat. Positive face is threatened because voicing can risk implying that employees cannot handle the situation by themselves (Wood & Kroger, 1994), which in essence can signal the negative image that they are not self-reliant (Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). Also, if the employee does not present their idea in a trustworthy and competent fashion, he or she can experience positive face loss (Wilson, 1992). Prior voice research gives support to the idea that speaking up can harm one's positive face, as evidenced by interviewed employees' primary concerns with being viewed negatively and tarnishing one's public image post-voice (Milliken et al., 2003). Speaking up can cause one to be labeled undesirably, such as a complainer, not a team player (Milliken et al., 2003), and disloyal (Burris, 2012) – all of which are undesirable.

Secondly, because the employee is asking for permission for a course of action that he or she wants to take freely, negative face is also under threat. Negative face is threatened because voicing puts employees in situations where they likely have less freedom to act without imposition. To clarify, if the voiced idea is rejected, employees are essentially given a directive on what they cannot do, lowering their freedom to act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). If the voiced idea is supported, employees may feel obliged to take action on that idea, also lowering their freedom to act (Wood & Kroger, 1994). In addition, employees whose ideas are supported are likely to feel indebted to their managers, with pressures on them to act grateful and reciprocate the support in the future, also lowering their future autonomy (i.e., negative face) (Goldsmith, 1992; Wood & Kroger, 1994).

It makes sense then that speaking up is often deterred by people's fear of being turned down (Morrison & Milliken, 2003), which would violate an employee's sense of positive and negative face. Also, considering in particular the negative face threat of voice can help explain why some people may be more inclined to pursue an idea without permission first, following the popular adage "It is easier to beg forgiveness [later] than to ask permission" (Young, 2000). Taking the above into account, individuals who are more sensitive to the face threats of speaking up are less likely to engage in this risky behavior. Thus, managers who seek to encourage voice and increase the number of ideas being offered will likely have greater success if they help mitigate rather than exacerbate an employee's face threat (McLaughlin, Cody, & Hair, 1983).

Given that voicing already places an employee's face in a precarious position in the hands of the manager, the way in which a manager responds and communicates in particular negative idea feedback (which is further face threatening; Brown & Levinson, 1978; Wilson et al., 1998) can have significant face consequences for the employee. Some rejection communications are

much more likely to exacerbate face threat than others. For example, as noted in Study 1, some managers ridicule an employee's idea and question their intentions. This type of belittling behavior aggravates face threat (Penman, 1990). On the other hand, many managers per Study 1 try to make the employee feel listened to and empathized with, despite having to turn down the idea. Demonstrating commonality with the employee in this way is a face-enhancing behavior (Penman, 1990), which helps mitigate an employee's face threat. How a manager cares for an employee's face needs during a voice rejection conversation has important implications for the employee's reaction and the manager-subordinate relationship. "Perpetrating a highly face-threatening act while causing as little offense as possible" (Breeze, 2012: 235) allows managers to preserve their relationships with their voicing employees. If managers fail to mitigate their employees' face threat during an idea rejection, employees are likely to try and disengage from all future interactions with the manager (Cupach & Metts, 1994). This disengagement may help to explain why employees who have managers that demonstrate less face support have lower performance levels and shorter periods of time between poor performance issues (Fairhurst, Green, & Kay, 1984; Howell, Harrison, et al., 2015). In comparison to the negative effects of face threat on overall performance, exacerbated face threat is likely to cause an even greater decline in discretionary behaviors involving the manager such as voice because such behaviors are not explicit requirements of their job. To sum, managers that use rejection strategies that do not mitigate the face threat of an idea rejection are likely to do harm to their relationship with that employee, which in turn, will hurt the employee's willingness to speak up again in the future. Thus, to better understand how rejection strategies vary in terms of mitigating or exacerbating an employee's face, I examine each rejection dimension through a politeness theory lens.

Rejection Dimensions, Face Threat, and Future Voice Frequency

Rejection totality. Rejection totality refers to how complete and decisive a manager acts when turning down an idea. Managers who choose a rejection strategy characterized by high rejection totality tend to reject the entire idea and do so in a more linguistically direct fashion than managers who choose a low rejection totality strategy. Per politeness theory, this direct form of turning down an idea completely without any sort of endorsement for even an ancillary component of the idea is considered the least polite and therefore the least face-threat mitigating (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Words that convey decisiveness in the rejection decision, such as "completely" and "absolutely," have been categorized as upgraders (or exacerbators) of face threat (House & Kasper, 1981). Again, as noted above, voicing an idea already places the employee's face needs in a threatening position. Once a manager communicates his or her rejection of the employee's idea, an employee likely feels even more like his or her face needs are being minimized or violated. Using a strategy high on rejection totality is likely to augment that perception of face threat.

In contrast, when a manager acts with low rejection totality, employee face threat is more likely to be mitigated. Take for example an idea that receives a partial rejection (some of the idea is supported). Positive face threat is mitigated because a partial rejection gives employees at least a modicum of managerial approval (Clayman, 2002; Lim & Bowers, 1991). Another example of a low rejection totality strategy is when managers table ideas for the future rather than rejecting the idea outright during the initial voice conversation. Using delays when delivering negative news is a form of politeness strategy (Davidson, 1984, 1990) that is likely to be less damaging to an employee's face since the idea is not actually rejected, but rather set aside for later judgment. Use of hedges (words and phrases such as "kind of" and "perhaps" that allow a speaker to communicate more tentatively) is also a common characteristic of low rejection totality strategies that acts as a form of politeness strategy to help mitigate face threat (e.g., Brown & Levinson,

1987; Davidson, 1984, 1984; Stewart, 2008). In addition, showing restraint and responding more tentatively to the employee's idea helps mitigate negative face threat as well because a less decisive rejection gives employees more leeway to either freely pursue at least a portion of their idea or decide on their own after gathering more information to drop the idea (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Clayman, 2002). Managers who use a low rejection totality strategy are in essence giving their employee a way to save face from the extremely face-precarious situation of having a voiced idea rejected. Receiving a fractional rejection or a less-than-final rejection decision gives employees the opportunity to latch onto the part of the idea that is being approved (Clayman, 2002) or continue to work on improving the idea. For instance, if an employee does reframe and adopt only the accepted portion of their idea as their original idea, the face-threatening managerial rejection becomes more irrelevant – almost as if it never took place.

Not mitigating an employee's face threat during a rejection conversation goes directly against a manager's goal of relationship preservation as noted in Study 1 (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Cupach & Carson, 2002). While acting politely and minimizing face threat shows one's consideration for the other person (Kochman, 1984) and helps to reaffirm and strengthen the relationship (Lakoff, 1973), exacerbating face threat can lead to relational devaluation, the perception that the other party does not regard the relationship as valuable (Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998). Thus, a manager's face threatening behaviors can make an employee feel like their relationship is unimportant to the manager, ultimately causing harm to the manager-subordinate relationship. This effect can be observed by an employee's increased withdrawal and disengagement from the manager, which includes decreased levels of conversation engagement, cooperation toward mutual goals, and willingness to work together in the future (Brown, 1968; Cupach & Metts, 1994; Deutsch, 1961; Tjosvold & Sun, 2000).

When this manager-subordinate relationship suffers, prior research suggests that employee voice frequency is also likely to decline (e.g., Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Milliken et al., 2003). The face threat exacerbation perpetrated by the manager is likely to fuel an employee's perception that the manager will not be supportive of his or her ideas, which has been connected to less willingness to speak up (Milliken et al., 2003). Without a positive manager-subordinate relationship, employees are also more likely to psychologically detach from the organization or have a negative attitude towards the organization (Burris et al., 2008; Frone, 2000) and thus be less willing to go over and above their regular job duties to engage in future OCB voice behaviors. To sum, unmitigated face threat by a manager during a voice rejection negatively impacts the manager-subordinate relationship, which in turn, adversely affects that employee's future voice frequency.

In addition, specific to the dimension of rejection totality, related research on social exchanges and the norm of reciprocity suggests that acting with more openness to an employee's idea (i.e., demonstrating low rejection totality) can lead the employee to reciprocate this generosity and demonstrate less self-centered tactics (Weingart, Prietula, Hyder, & Genovese, 1999). When employees act with less focus on just themselves and their self-preservation, they are more likely to act altruistically towards the organization and engage in OCB's such as voice (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Thus, by allowing the employee to better maintain face by generously giving some ground to the idea, such as in the form of partial endorsement rather than full outright rejection, managers help preserve their relationship with the employee and garner more voice from the employee in the future. For these reasons, I hypothesize:

H1a: Rejection totality has a negative effect on future voice frequency.

H1b: The relationship between rejection totality and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.

Diagnosticity. Diagnosticity describes how specific and actionable negative idea feedback is from the manager. A high level of diagnosticity is likely to exacerbate an employee's general face threat from the voice rejection conversation in two ways. Firstly, as a manager outlines more and more various and specific reasons for why the idea is not being endorsed, an employee's positive face, or need for approval, is likely to be violated. Each new reason for disapproval of the idea could effectively intensify an employee's feeling that their manager does not approve of them and their idea. Furthermore, by offering increasingly more pieces of diagnostic information, managers can appear to be sending the message that employees lack the competence or foresight to know what is appropriate in the organization on their own (Goldsmith, 1992; Wilson et al., 1998). That implicit message intensifies a rejection's face threat greatly since one of the concerns that makes speaking up face-threatening pre-rejection as noted above is the risk of appearing incompetent (Wilson, 1992; Wood & Kroger, 1994). Secondly, it imposes on an employee's negative face or autonomy because the manager is explaining the many different reasons for which the employee should not pursue the idea any further. Each new explanation for why the idea cannot be endorsed, for instance about various organizational constraints or implementation barriers, could effectively intensify an employee's feeling that their manager (and the organization) will not allow him or her to act freely and without imposition. Providing too many reasons for why an idea is being rejected can effectively exaggerate the size of the idea's problems, which prior research has shown exacerbates the face threat of criticism (Tracy & Eisenberg, 1990).

On the other hand, at a low level of diagnosticity, managers may provide employees with less information that is more holistic in nature for explaining why an idea is being turned down.

Providing a single broad justification for the rejection, rather than a long and specific laundry list of ways in which the idea can be improved, can help mitigate a rejection's inherent face threat by allowing managers to convey their respect for the voicing employee (Brown and Levinson, 1986) while avoiding implications that the employee is incompetent. Providing some justification to the employee also helps mitigate a rejected employee's face threat by signaling recognition that a social norm of avoiding face threatening actions has occurred (via the idea rejection), which reaffirms the validity of those politeness norms (Scott & Lyman, 1968). Prior empirical research provides confirming evidence that giving at least one causal account helps to affirm the message receiver's face, which in turn leads to their higher likelihood of settling a dispute (Brett et al., 2007). It makes sense that employees would value at least a minimum justification for why their idea is being turned down despite a small cost to their positive face given that people are not simply motivated by the desire to protect their self-esteem but also a desire to reduce uncertainty through a better understanding of themselves and their surroundings (Brockner, Wiesenfeld, & Diekmann, 2009). In summary, some diagnostic information is likely beneficial to employees and their face needs, but too much specific information can overwhelm an employee and raise new face concerns.

As mentioned above, a manager's exacerbation of face threat to the employee during a voice rejection will likely harm their working relationship, which in turn adversely affects voice frequency. Thus, I hypothesize that rejection diagnosticity impacts voice frequency in the following way:

H2a: Diagnosticity has a negative effect on future voice frequency.

H2b: The relationship between diagnosticity and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.

Interpersonal sensitivity. Rejections characterized by a high level of interpersonal sensitivity demonstrate a manager's high level of respect for the voicing employee. Accordingly, these types of rejection are less threatening to an employee's face than those characterized by a low level of interpersonal sensitivity. Interpersonally sensitive rejections often begin with acknowledging the employee's area of concern or interest as valid, which helps to mitigate the face threats of being rejected (Stewart, 2008) and given advice (Goldsmith, 2000). Interpersonally sensitive rejections also often include some form of positive feedback to the employee, for example for their efforts in speaking up or for the idea's creativity, despite the idea's faults. This inclusion of positive feedback is a form of face-giving that helps mitigate threats to positive face (Penman, 1990; Tracy & Eisenberg, 1990), as employees are receiving some validation and approval from their manager. Taking turns speaking and making the employee feel listened to, both common characteristics of interpersonally sensitive rejections, also help the employee maintain positive face (Tracy & Eisenberg, 1990) as it demonstrates the manager's belief that the employee's idea is worth his or her time, and thus that the employee's competence is not in question. In addition, interpersonally sensitive rejections tend to focus negative feedback on the task (or in this case, the specific idea and its flaws) versus the voicer, which helps avoid the personally hurtful face violation that occurs from criticisms that are directed specifically at the individual's identity and intentions (Penman, 1990; Wood & Kroger, 1994). Employees who speak up oftentimes expect their managers to be competent communicators, which means that they will listen to their ideas and act friendly (Wellmon, 1988) and warm, in addition to competent in their idea feedback responses (Eagly & Carli, 2007). When managers respond to voiced ideas in keeping with these politeness norms by acting respectfully, listening fully, and being caring and gentle when delivering negative idea feedback, they help mitigate the face threat of voice rejection.

In comparison, interpersonally insensitive rejections exacerbate face threat in many ways. Some of the most extreme cases of low interpersonal sensitivity rejections include personal attacks towards the employee's personality or intentions that directly threaten an employee's positive face (Penman, 1990; Wood & Kroger, 1994). Failure to separate a person's idea or position from their identity when providing criticism has been shown empirically to increase face threat to the feedback recipient (Tjosvold & Sun, 2000). It is no surprise then that name-calling for instance is an extremely face threatening communication tactic (Tracy & Eisenberg, 1990) that people perceive is purposefully offensive (Goffman, 1967). Another highly face-threatening conversation tactic sometimes found in interpersonally insensitive rejections are lexical intensifiers, also known as swear words (House & Kasper, 1981). In other less extreme cases of interpersonally insensitive rejections, managers exude negative emotions towards the employee for bringing up a flawed idea. Openly expressing negative emotions towards someone violates politeness norms (Brown & Levinson, 1987), further exacerbating face threat. Ultimately, by *not* demonstrating interpersonal sensitivity during a rejection conversation, a manager further violates an employee's face needs.

As discussed with previous dimensions, exacerbated face threat is likely to adversely affect the manager-subordinate relationship and thus lead an employee to speak up less to their manager in the future. In addition to politeness theory research that shows how face threatened individuals tend to detach from the relationship with the violator (Brown, 1968; Deutsch, 1961), other related research also lends some support to this hypothesis. For example, work on employee mistreatment has also shown that personalized mistreatment that makes employees feel that they are being personally attacked leads to work withdrawal behaviors (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & Olsen-Buchanan, 2004), which negatively impacts voice (Rusbult et al., 1988). Furthermore, prior work has shown that person-focused feedback (often a trait of low interpersonally sensitive rejections)

can diminish an employee's intrinsic motivation and creativity (Amabile, 1996), and conflict with one's manager can damage employee attitudes towards the organization (Frone, 2000). Both of these effects are likely to lead to a decrease of employee voice behavior since they may be both less creatively charged to come up with new ideas and less motivated to come up with new ideas that benefit the organization in the first place. Lastly, more than probably any other dimension, low interpersonal sensitivity is likely to exacerbate an employee's fear of being punished or criticized harshly by the manager with future voice attempts, which is a common reason people withhold ideas (Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Based on this, I hypothesize:

H3a: Interpersonal sensitivity has a positive effect on future voice frequency.

H3b: The relationship between interpersonal sensitivity and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.

Bilateral inquiry. Bilateral inquiry is defined as the extent to which the manager includes the employee in the conversation and decision-making reasoning during the voice rejection episode. When managers use a rejection strategy characterized by high bilateral inquiry, they draw from the employee's perspective to turn the idea down rather than turning it down solely of their own volition. Bilateral inquiry helps mitigate a voicing employee's face threat in several ways. First, employees whose managers ask them probing questions that guide them to reject their own ideas are more likely to feel that rejection decisions are mutual, versus purely coming from the manager (Goldsmith, 2000; Penman, 1990). Because the employee is made to feel that the rejection decision is on their own volition, the employee's need for negative face (also described as autonomy) is less threatened. Gradually nudging employees to the decision to reject their own idea allows them to save face and reach an agreement with the manager, which "detoxifies" the manager's rejection of its face threat (Clayman, 2002: 237; Penman, 1990). Dissociating oneself

as the sole actor from a face threatening message is a form of politeness strategy that helps to mitigate the negative effects of face threat (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

On the other hand, when a manager uses a rejection strategy characterized by low bilateral inquiry, the manager's rejection communication emphasizes his or her own personal directive to the employee to stop exploring the idea. Politeness theory, with its emphasis of not imposing on other people (as a sign of respect for their negative face or autonomy) asserts that making commands or directives is inherently face threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Penman, 1990). This idea that direct commands violate an individual's negative face also has empirical support (Brett et al., 2007). Low bilateral inquiry can exacerbate an employee's positive face as well. When a manager speaks in such a way that does not allow for much room for the employee to be involved in the decision-making process (for example, by monologuing or not entertaining further discussion about a topic), it can imply that the manager feels the employee's views are not worth listening to (Stewart, 2008). In a way, a rejection characterized by low bilateral inquiry reinforces the power asymmetry between the manager and the employee during a rejection conversation, whereas high bilateral inquiry helps to mitigate face threat by putting the employee on a more equal footing with the manager in terms of the conversation (Bayraktaroglu, 1991; Bourdieu, 1991; Breeze, 2012). Overall, low bilateral inquiry is much less effective at mitigating the face threat of having an idea rejected.

Similar to the previous dimensions, the exacerbated face threat of a low bilateral inquiry rejection strategy is likely to cause harm to the manager-subordinate relationship, which consequently is likely to lower employee voice frequency. In addition to the aforementioned research using politeness theory that supports this prediction, an area of related research may provide some additional support about the effect of bilateral inquiry on future voice frequency.

Research on performance appraisals has shown that individuals who are allowed to participate in their own appraisal process are more willing to participate in them again in the future (Campbell & Lee, 1988; Ivancevich & McMahon, 1982). Because performance appraisals are similar to voice in that they are both face threatening with their inclusion of feedback (Brown & Levinson, 1987), one could argue that people allowed to participate in their own voice rejection process through a manager's high bilateral inquiry will be more willing to speak up again in the future. Thus, I hypothesize:

H4a: Bilateral inquiry has a positive effect on future voice frequency.

H4b: The relationship between bilateral inquiry and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.

Rejection Dimensions, Learning, and Future Voice Quality

To explore how each of the rejection dimensions impact employee future voice quality, I draw from prior research on negative feedback from the education literature. Many managers in my qualitative study emphasized the important goal of coaching employees through the voice rejection process, and this process has many similarities to educators coaching their students through a difficult problem or failure experience. These managers, like educators, care not only about turning down a flawed idea, but also doing it in a way that enhances their subjects' learning from the interaction. These managers seem to understand that when managed carefully, the voice rejection conversation, though disappointing, is a prime opportunity to coach employees as disagreements can stimulate self-reflection, attention, curiosity, and better learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2000; McKeachie & Svinicki, 2014). Employee learning around what kinds of ideas are more likely to be successfully endorsed by the manager is important because equipping employees with this knowledge should improve the quality of an employee's pitched ideas.

Although employee voice quality is a relatively under-researched variable in the voice literature, prior research on creativity has shown that individuals who emphasize learning have higher quality ideas in terms of novelty and feasibility (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009). Piezunka and Dahlander (2015) have also found that rejections with the right information can help external contributors submit more appropriate ideas in the future.

Decades of education research in classrooms also show a strong connection between learning and improved performance (e.g., Bilodeau, Bilodeau, & Schumsky, 1959; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Salmoni, Schmidt, & Walter, 1984). Note that in this context, learning has to do with employees getting a better understanding of how ideas are evaluated, and performance can be gauged by the quality of employees' future voiced ideas. While some rejection strategies can make an employee's learning more complete or more easily acquired, enhancing future voice quality, other dimensions can thwart an employee's learning by causing confusion or denial, which can negatively affect future voice quality. Thus, the education literature can provide a rich background of information to help delineate how each rejection dimension affects the efficacy of feedback in improving subjects' learning, which in turn is critical to improving subjects' performance in terms of future voice quality. In the next section, I outline these predictions for each dimension.

Rejection totality. High rejection totality, which is characterized by a complete and definitive rejection, helps provide clarity to employees about their idea by not diluting a manager's rejection decision. When a manager turns down the entirety of an employee's idea decisively, it is clear to employees that their ideas are not up to their managers' standards. Prior education research has shown that when a student has less knowledge about a particular domain, learning is improved when instructions are as explicit as possible (Britton & Gülgöz, 1991; Kintsch, 1994).

Because managers have organizational knowledge that employees likely do not have when evaluating ideas, employee learning will also likely benefit from the more explicit feedback of a rejection with high rejection totality. This clarity of message helps employees attain more accurate knowledge around idea standards, which is a characteristic of good feedback (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Low rejection totality, on the other hand, can muddle the clarity of a manager's rejection message. Because employees already have a tendency to distort negative feedback in a way that is self-serving (Kunda, 1987), managers that use a rejection tactic with low rejection totality may not be sending a strong enough message to the employee that their idea has significant flaws. When a manager withholds judgment on the idea or allows the employee to conduct a trial or pilot of their idea (low rejection totality), employees are not getting a clear signal about what their manager's true concerns are with the idea. This omission of a decisive rejection message can prevent them from acquiring accurate knowledge around the criteria for idea evaluation and what constitutes a good idea to their manager, which is important for improving the quality of their ideas in the future (Sadler, 1998). In other words, when an idea is truly bad, being open-ended in judgement can send the wrong message to employees that their idea actually has merit, which distorts learning around what kinds of ideas are likely to be supported. On the other hand, when managers decisively turn down ideas with high rejection totality, employees at least have learned one example of an unendorsed idea to measure future voiced ideas against, helping to improve future voice quality. Thus, I hypothesize:

H5a: Rejection totality has a positive effect on future voice quality.

H5b: The relationship between rejection totality and future voice quality is mediated by learning.

Diagnosticity. To get the most benefit from negative idea feedback, an employee should leave the voice conversation better knowing what constitutes a good idea, how their rejected idea compares to a good idea, and how they can improve their rejected idea to make it better (Sadler, 1998). Highly diagnostic rejections, which include several actionable and specific comments by the manager on why the idea is being turned down, help fuel this kind of employee learning around idea standards and evaluation criteria. By giving several specific reasons for why the idea is not being supported, managers can help expand employees' schemas around what types of parameters ideas have to pass to garner organizational support, including the addition of unique organizational knowledge that comes from their managerial perspective. When a manager provides information on how he or she evaluated the idea and came to a rejection decision, it likely will have a much greater effect on employee learning than just providing the idea rejection decision alone (Carless, 2006; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Also, including information on how an idea can be improved or corrected for the future helps feedback be more effective in enhancing learning (Lunsford, 1997). Specific (rather than vague) information likewise is more effective in helping employees learn because it helps to focus employees' attention on what are the most important evaluation criteria to their manager (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Locke & Latham, 1984).

On the other hand, rejections with low diagnosticity tend to be more general and vague in terms of explaining why an idea is being turned down and how the idea can be improved. Employees rejected in this fashion likely understand that their idea, since it was rejected, has some major flaws. However, without more specific details from their manager, they are likely to not fully comprehend what about their idea was the most problematic. Overall, the lack of corrective information when coupled with a rejection is very ineffective at altering an employee's

understanding of what constitutes a good idea (Breakwell, 1983), which means that the opportunity for the employee to learn from the rejection has been lost. Without much acquisition of new specific information, the quality of their future voiced ideas is not likely to improve, especially in comparison to employees whose ideas are rejected with high diagnosticity. Therefore, I hypothesize:

H6a: Diagnosticity has a positive effect on future voice quality.

H6b: The relationship between diagnosticity and future voice quality is mediated by learning.

Interpersonal sensitivity. Interpersonally sensitive rejections demonstrate a manager's respect and care for the employee, despite their idea having major flaws. By making employees feel acknowledged, they are less likely to partake in defensive information processing, which can divert limited cognitive resources away from learning (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Kunda, 1990; Ruttan & Nordgren, 2015). Turning down ideas in an interpersonally sensitive way, for example by coupling praise for an employee's effort with the rejection message, can also help an employee process the manager's feedback in a less-biased and distorted way, which helps ensure more accurate learning around why their idea is being rejected (Chance, Norton, Gino, & Ariely, 2011; Ditto & Lopez, 1992). Indeed educational scholars often encourage negative feedback to be provided alongside some praise in order to enhance efficacy (e.g., Freeman & Lewis, 1998).

In contrast, rejections that are interpersonally insensitive are oftentimes seen as the least effective for learning and improving performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). These types of idea rejections commonly incorporate negative feedback targeted at the employee, rather than just the content of the idea itself. Putting down employees for example as incompetent or difficult can cause them to increase commitment to their original idea and reject any information a manager

provides for why the idea is flawed, effectively deterring any learning from the manager and the rejection conversation (Johnson et al., 2000). Also, person-directed negative feedback is more likely to lead employees to fixate on that part of the rejection, which takes valuable cognitive resources away from learning about evaluation standards for ideas (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996). Consequently, future voice is less likely to be improved than when managers turn down an idea in an interpersonally sensitive way. For these reasons, I hypothesize:

H7a: Interpersonal sensitivity has a positive effect on future voice quality.

H7b: The relationship between interpersonal sensitivity and future voice quality is mediated by learning.

Bilateral inquiry. Rejections characterized by a high level of bilateral inquiry involve a manager bringing in the employee's perspective to decide an idea's fate. Rather than the manager deciding alone that the idea should be turned down (as reflected in low bilateral inquiry rejections), managers often get their employee to agree with them that the idea is not worth pursuing. When employees are involved in the decision-making conversation, they are learning more actively, which has been shown to increase performance and transfer of knowledge to new situations more than passive learning (which is characteristic of a rejection conversation with low bilateral inquiry; Goldstein, 2007; Prince, 2004). Having the employee verbalize their own personal evaluation of the idea with guidance from the manager sharpens their critical thinking (Brooke, 2006) and also helps the employee remember the evaluation criteria better in the long-term (Craik & Watkins, 1973). In addition, involving the employee into the rejection decision is more likely to garner an employee's decision acceptance and deter defensiveness, which often inhibits learning (Bayley & French, 2008; Johnson et al., 2000). Ultimately, by getting the employee to evaluate the idea

further in an active learning climate (rather than insisting on a manager's judgment of the idea), managers help the employee more readily acquire new knowledge through self-assessment and experimentation that is supported by the manager's feedback (Katz-Navon, Naveh, & Stern, 2009; Taras, 2001, 2002).

One particular method of employing bilateral inquiry that was frequently cited by managers in my qualitative study was asking employees a series of thoughtful questions that helped lead them to the same rejection conclusion as the manager. This process of asking the employee questions that help guide the employee's thought process to eventual rejection reflects managers' use of the Socratic method, which is the technique of creating a dialogue that leads students to an answer rather than just providing the answer directly. This method is frequently used by educators to enhance learning of core concepts and increase participants' critical thinking abilities (Brooke, 2006; Shim & Walczak, 2012). Engaging in this kind of dialogue can also benefit learning by helping the employee increase encoding specificity and develop more diverse schemes around what types of ideas will be successful in the organization (Brooke, 2006).

In comparison, by not roping in the employee in the evaluation and rejection of the idea, low bilateral inquiry fails to take as much advantage of the learning opportunity of voice rejection. Employees do not get the opportunity to self-assess in an active learning climate, but rather are informed of the rejection decision in a passive learning environment. They are thus less likely to remember any evaluation criteria their managers mention for the next time an idea is voiced (Craik & Watkins, 1973; Goldstein, 2007). As noted above, learning around evaluation criteria and idea standards is important because it help positively impact the quality of an employee's future voiced ideas. Thus, I hypothesize:

H8a: Bilateral inquiry has a positive effect on future voice quality.

H8b: The relationship between bilateral inquiry and future voice quality is mediated by learning.

Interactions among the Rejection Dimensions

The first four hypotheses in my study connected the rejection dimensions to face threat and future voice frequency, while the next four hypotheses connected the dimensions to learning and future voice quality. In the next section, I argue how these two mechanisms can interact with each other to impact voice quality. To do this, I emphasize the strong affective response that is related to face threat and highlight the cognitive nature of learning. First, regarding face threat, prior research has shown that while face supportive behaviors produce positive emotions, face threatening behaviors produce feelings of anger, anxiety, and hurt (Cupach & Carson, 2002; Cupach & Metts, 1994; Ren & Gray, 2009). Face threats communicate to the message receiver, in this case the voicing employee, that the message sender, the manager, rejects their self-image (Goffman, 1967) and disrespects their identity (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Because individuals are generally attached to their self-image, face threat thus generates these strong negative emotions (Goffman, 1967). I therefore treat face threat concerns as a more affect-related variable. On the other hand, learning is more of a cognitive process. Learning requires attention, the processing of new information in relation to pre-existing information (Bloom, 1976; Dochy, Rijdt, & Dyck, 2002), and oftentimes the unfreezing of people's cognitive fixations (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Jansson & Smith, 1991). As such, many education scholars have focused on enhancing learning through improving cognitive processes, such as through cognitive modeling (which includes a verbalization of thought processes when problem-solving, Debowski, Wood, & Bandura, 2001). Learning is an outcome not only characterized by the cognitive process of

comprehending information, but also the cognitive process of encoding information into short and long-term memory (Craik & Watkins, 1973; McKeachie & Svinicki, 2014).

When employees encounter conflict with their managers such as having their ideas rejected, face threat will trigger a rapid and more automatic negative affective response in the employee. This in turn can have a strong impact on an employee's willingness and ability to process the information a manager provides (Weingart, Behfar, Bendersky, Todorova, & Jehn, 2015), which can lead to decreased levels of learning. Strong negative emotions divert cognitive resources away from the information processing necessary for learning (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Kahneman, 1973). When employees minds are dedicated to the cognitive load of working through the strong negative emotions that can result from a face-threatening rejection (Bögels, Kendrick, & Levinson, 2015), the information provided by managers in a rejection message is less likely to hold employees' attention and be retained (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2014). Without the information encoded into memory, employees will be unable to draw from it for improving future voiced ideas. In other words, a strong face threat response from certain rejection strategies is likely to moderate the effect of other rejection dimensions on employee learning, and subsequently, future voice quality.

For example, a high rejection totality rejection is likely to trigger particularly strong face threat responses that disrupt the potential learning benefits of high bilateral inquiry. Rejection totality denotes the oppositional force with which the manager asserts his or her rejection, so high rejection totality rejections are a form of direct and oppositionally intense conflict expression (Weingart et al., 2015) that exacerbate face threat. The forcefulness inherent to high rejection totality rejections can escalate conflict (Weingart et al., 2015) and induce strong negative emotions, such as sadness, hurt, and anger (Buckley, Winkel, & Leary, 2004). Experiencing these

negative emotions activates employees' emotional and impulsive hot system; once activated, it becomes difficult for employees to switch over to processing information through their more controlled and logical cool system (Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999). In essence, a forceful rejection that exacerbates face threat diverts cognitive resources away from information processing to managing face needs and emotions (Muraven, Shmueli, & Burkley, 2006; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998). This in turn makes the reasoned deliberation and reflexive cognitive reasoning needed for learning and subsequent improvements in idea quality less accessible (Edmondson & Smith, 2006; Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999). Indeed, prior experimental research has found that individuals cognitive performance decreases after feeling rejected because available information is processed less deeply and carefully (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002). The potential learning benefits from the active participation in high bilateral inquiry rejections are thus less likely to appear in the form of improved idea quality when rejection totality is high. In other words, high rejection totality diminishes the effect of increased information encoding possibilities of high bilateral inquiry rejections on learning. I hypothesize:

> *H9: Rejection totality moderates the relationship between bilateral inquiry and voice quality. Bilateral inquiry relates to higher levels of voice quality when RT is low, but not when RT is high.*

Likewise, lack of interpersonal sensitivity can also trigger strong negative emotional reactions that divert cognitive resources and thus hamper employee learning. Low interpersonal sensitivity rejections, which are oftentimes characterized by personal attacks and a lack of empathetic listening, exacerbate employee face threat because they deeply violate politeness norms of affirming employees' face needs for affirmation (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Tracy & Tracy, 1998). As noted above, increased face threat sparks negative emotions (Goffman, 1967), which in turn can influence an employee's capacity for deep information processing and learning

during the immediate voice rejection conversation. In a threatening work environment, employees are less likely to engage and focus on learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978), with prior research indicating that employee judgments of workplace hostility lead to decreases in participation on cognitively taxing tasks such as problem-solving (Dutton, 1993). This suggests that employees will be less likely to put forth effort into accurately and deeply processing the diagnostic information provided in high diagnosticity rejections. In addition, other researchers have also shown that rejection can lead to the antisocial behaviors of ignoring (Buckley et al., 2004) and devaluing the rejecter's input (Pepitone & Wilpizeski, 1960). This suggests that employees will be less likely to pay attention to and actively engage with the diagnostic information provided in high diagnosticity rejections. Working on quality improvement requires both deliberate cognitive effort and engagement from employees (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), so highly interpersonally insensitive rejections can be argued to diminish the possible learning benefits of high diagnosticity by chipping away at both employee learning efforts and engagement. Thus, the rich information availability of a high diagnosticity rejection is less likely to affect employee learning and future voice quality positively when managers act insensitively during the rejection.

> *H10: Interpersonal sensitivity moderates the relationship between diagnosticity and voice quality. Diagnosticity relates to higher levels of voice quality when IS is high, but not when IS is low.*

Note that my moderation arguments emphasize the primacy of the negative affective response triggered by face threat over any possible learning responses. Because face threat during rejections first triggers the hot system which then in turn affects the capacity of the more logical cool system but *not* vice versa (Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999), I do not make predictions about how an initial learning response influences the effects of a subsequent emotional response related to face threat. Per my hypotheses 1-4b, I predict that face threat mediates the relationship of the

rejection dimensions on future voice frequency. It follows then that I do not make predictions of how the rejection dimensions interact to influence future voice frequency. In other words, I do not predict how the rejection dimensions that correspond closely to learning processes moderate the effect of the rejection dimensions that exacerbate face threat on future voice frequency because the same arguments around diversion of cognitive resources cannot apply when the face threat response occurs first. My full measurement model is depicted in Figure 3.

Summary

In summary, I draw from prior theories and research to argue that the four rejection dimensions noted from my qualitative study have an impact on future voice behavior, specifically voice frequency and quality, in a multitude of ways. Using a politeness theory lens, each dimension can be connected to the exacerbation or mitigation of face threat, which in turn impacts employees' future voice frequency. In addition, many of the dimensions also influence the clarity of a manager's rejection message and the likelihood that employees will effectively learn from the rejection conversation, which in turn impacts employees' future voice quality. Furthermore, I predict how these dimensions interact with one another to further influence voice quality. I argue that it is important for managers to consider these dimensions during their rejection conversations if they want to maintain a climate that encourages and helps elicit high-quality employee voice. In the next chapter, I detail the methods and results of Study 2, a controlled lab study in which I manipulate the four rejection dimensions and measure participants' reactions to test the above hypotheses.

Chapter 5: Study 2 – Lab Study

Study 1 used qualitative methods to draw out four dimensions of managerial rejection strategies that managers saw as relevant to two particular rejection goals, relationship preservation and employee coaching. Achievement of these managerial goals during rejection appears to lead to employees' higher future voice frequency and voice quality. In Study 2, I test the hypotheses I laid out in Chapter 4 with a between-subjects experiment testing how each rejection dimension impacts participants' future voice frequency and future voice quality. Participants who submitted an idea to a confederate administrative evaluator received rejection communications manipulated along the four rejection dimensions. The experiment ultimately tested the effect of two dimensions at one time (diagnosticity with interpersonal sensitivity, and rejection totality with bilateral inquiry) with two separate 2x2s, leading to nine possible conditions for a participant to be randomly assigned when including the control group. After the rejection, data was collected on participants' reactions, including their future willingness to speak to the administrator with a new idea. In addition, a second idea was solicited and rated for idea quality to test those corresponding hypotheses.

Method

Participants. Participants for this study included 332 undergraduate students who were recruited through either an extra credit incentive in their undergraduate class or a monetary incentive of $10. 78 of the 332 (23.5%) were paid participants. Participants had an average age of 21, and 55% of them were female.

Procedures. When signing up for the study, students were informed that the research project was being conducted as part of an official Management Department initiative to improve

the student experience in the classroom. They were informed that the purpose of the study was to solicit feedback from students and examine if there was a connection between students' personalities and the issues they find the most important for improving the classroom. To go along with this, students who signed up for the study were asked to take part in a pre-study survey that measured various personality traits.

In the study description, participants were also told that they would be meeting with an official business school administrator during their lab time so that the Management Department could get the most candid feedback from students. They were informed that the administrator's role was to evaluate all of the ideas in order to pass along the best to the Chair of the Management Department for possible implementation, with the best idea givers receiving a reward (in the form of a $50 Amazon gift card). They also were provided a copy of a signed memo from the Chair of the Management Department on university letterhead that emphasized the same study description. These steps were all taken in order to have participants take the task of speaking up about a classroom improvement idea and having their idea rejected seriously. Reading this memo not only helps add to the legitimacy of this experimental cover story, but it also gives the confederate administrator more credibility as an evaluator and helps ensure that the ideas students propose are meaningful to them. Past experimental designs have used memos from company leadership to emphasize the importance of a task to participants (e.g., Reynolds, Leavitt, & DeCelles, 2010; Ziegert & Hanges, 2005). The fact that these participants are current students who have taken classes in Management Department should also have increased participants' investment in the idea and the subsequent significance of the idea rejection. The study description, the Chair memo, and the pre-task survey items completed by the participants are available in Appendix B.

Upon arrival to the lab, participants were randomly assigned participant identification numbers that were used to assign them to a specific idea rejection manipulation. They were also provided a paper copy of the study description and Chair memo to review before the experiment began. Once all participants for the time session arrived and had reviewed the materials, participants (maximum of 9 participants per session) were brought into a room where they were introduced briefly to a trained confederate actor who used a specific pre-designed script to play the role of the official university administrator. The confederate was also equipped with an official university title, name placard, laptop, and briefcase and dressed in business professional attire to make her role as the official idea evaluator more convincing. Prior research has shown that trained confederates are effective for stimulating the desired affective conditions of an experiment and providing greater control for an interaction partner versus relying on naturally occurring affective interactions between individuals (Barsade, 2002). At the end of this brief meeting, participants were informed that they would be submitting their ideas to the confederate administrator virtually in order for her to evaluate them all during the single session.

Participants were then moved to a separate room with individual computer stations that were signed onto a chat program with the confederate administrator. To increase identification with the idea submission, participants personalized their chat avatars with their own picture using the computer's web camera. Participants were given two minutes to think about the idea they would submit to the confederate and then given instructions on submitting it to her via the chat program. After the participants virtually voiced their ideas, the confederate used pre-designed scripts adapted to each idea to reject them according to the randomly assigned rejection dimension manipulations. This idea feedback was also sent to the participants virtually via the chat program, and the confederate took care to try and send the feedback around the same time during the session.

After receiving their idea feedback, the confederate provided participants with a link to a post-rejection conversation survey. This survey included measures to gauge their reaction to the idea rejection manipulations and solicited a second new idea from them in order to evaluate participants' learning and changes in idea quality. This post-rejection survey can be found in Appendix B. Once the post-rejection survey was completed, participants were walked through a suspicion check and short verbal debriefing. Each participant received a debriefing form that noted the real purpose of the study and the fact that the Management Department would not be receiving the submitted ideas. Post-experiment, a random drawing of all participants was used to select recipients (one from the extra-credit student sample and one from the paid student sample) for the Amazon gift card rewards mentioned during the study's recruiting. The overall study protocol can be found in Appendix C.

Measures

Independent variables – rejection dimension manipulations. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two 2x2's that manipulated two rejection dimensions at a time, diagnosticity with interpersonal sensitivity and rejection totality with bilateral inquiry. Within each 2x2, they were randomly assigned to one of four possible conditions that combined either high or low levels of each respective dimension. The confederate administrator enacted each rejection dimension manipulation using a predesigned script. Note that to control for any confederate-based effects, only one confederate was used for the entirety of the study. Although the scripts were adapted ad hoc by the confederate to fit with the participants' ideas accordingly, great care was taken to train the confederate to turn down the idea using the specific idea rejection manipulations while keeping the other rejection dimensions as constant as possible across conditions. I used real ideas about improving the classroom that were previously submitted to the

University of Texas as part of a university initiative to train the confederate's use of each possible manipulation condition under my supervision and guidance.

To manipulate rejection totality, the confederate turned down the employee's entire idea in a decisive fashion (high) or turned down a portion of the idea more tentatively (low). The high level rejection totality manipulation included language such as "no, we can't use your idea" and "none of your idea is feasible." The low level rejection totality manipulation included language such as "hmmm… I'm not sure we can use your idea" and "maybe I'll keep that in mind." To manipulate diagnosticity, the confederate provided three specific reasons for why the idea was rejected (high) or only provided one general reason (low). The high level manipulation of diagnosticity included information on timing, cost, and HR constraints with inclusion of phrases such as "it would take way too much time… definitely over the timeline for this initiative of one semester," "it would cost more than the $5000 I have for this initiative," and "it will be very challenging to get [all the necessary parties] to go along with your idea." The low level manipulation of diagnosticity only included language on timing: "it would take way too much time." To manipulate interpersonal sensitivity, the confederate acted respectfully and complimented the employee during the rejection (high), or acted more negatively towards the employee (low). The high level interpersonal sensitivity manipulation included language such as "thank you for your suggestion" and "it sounds like you have put a lot of thought into your idea," while the low level interpersonal sensitivity manipulation included the phrases "your idea seems to have a lot of holes" and "it doesn't sound like you've really thought this one through." Finally, the confederate either involved the employee's perspective through questioning (high) or talked about only her perspective when making the rejection decision (low) to manipulate bilateral inquiry. In the high bilateral inquiry manipulation, the confederate gave the student three

opportunities to participate with question prompts such as "what do you think professors will think of this idea?" and "do you think your idea is doable within that timeline?". In the low bilateral inquiry manipulation, the confederate provided her feedback without allowing for any employee input. The confederate's full conversation scripts are available in Appendix E.

To ensure that the confederate's manipulation scripts were effective, I conducted a pilot scenario study of the manipulations on Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk), which has been shown to provide reliable data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The sample consisted of 272 participants who were currently employed with an average age of 35. 60% of the participants were male. Participants read a scenario in which they were asked to put themselves in the shoes of a student speaking up to a college administrator with an idea about the classroom. In the scenario, the student has their idea rejected by the administrator according to one of the eight possible conditions. After reading the scenario, participants were asked to answer manipulation check questions on all four dimensions (described in more detail below). Independent t-test analyses from the pilot data indicated that the rejection language included in the confederate's scripts worked as intended for each dimension. The analysis is summarized in Table 4. The full text for the scenario study setup and manipulations for this pilot are available in Appendix F.

Manipulation checks. Manipulation checks were used to measure the efficacy of the rejection dimension manipulations in the pilot study and in the experiment's post-rejection survey. To check the effectiveness of the diagnosticity manipulation, participants completed a 5-item adapted measure of specificity, rated on a 7-point scale (Shapiro et al., 1994). To check the effectiveness of the interpersonal sensitivity manipulation, participants completed a previously used 4-item adapted measure, rated on a 7-point scale (Shapiro et al., 1994). To check the effectiveness of the rejection totality manipulation, participants completed a 4-item measure

created for this study, rated on a 7-point scale. To check the effectiveness of the bilateral inquiry manipulation, participants completed a 3-item measure created for this study, rated on a 7-point scale. The rejection totality and bilateral inquiry scales were developed using a deductive approach based on the definitions (Hinkin, 1998) of the rejection dimensions that were outlined from the qualitative data analysis in Study 1. Following the guidelines of item development (Hinkin, 1998), items were worded using simple and familiar language that kept a consistent participant perspective and avoided double-barreled construction. Having four items for rejection totality and three items for bilateral inquiry also followed prior scholars' recommendations that three items is sufficient enough to provide adequate reliabilities (Cook, Hepworth, & Warr, 1981) while also providing parsimony to minimize biases due to participant survey fatigue (Schmitt & Stuits, 1985). A 7-point scale was chosen to keep consistency with the scales of the other two dimensions taken from Shapiro et. al (1994). The reliability of each of these scales was sufficient during the Mturk pilot (available in Table 3) and sufficient during the lab experiment (Cronbach's alpha of .78 for diagnosticity, .91 for interpersonal sensitivity, .92 for rejection totality, and .84 for bilateral inquiry). All items for each scale can be found in Appendix B.

Dependent variables. To capture participants' willingness to speak up again to the confederate in the future, I used an adapted 3-item measure of voice frequency (Detert & Burris, 2007; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) adjusted with future-tense with a 5-point Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .96.

Four measures of voiced idea quality were coded for each participant's first pre-rejection and second post-rejection idea. A trained independent coder blind to the hypotheses used a coding scheme (available in Appendix D) to code dichotomously whether or not the participant's ideas included consideration of the three following factors: budget, timing, and human resources. These

factors were drawn from prior research that has shown how managers are more likely to endorse ideas if they have taken into consideration possible implementation constraints due to budget, timing, and human resources (Burris, Rockmann, & Kimmons, 2017). If a participant mentioned any of these factors in their idea pitch, the coder rated it as 1 for that respective variable. For example, one participant's idea that was rated as 1 for budget consideration included the sentence, "it wouldn't cost anything to implement this." Another participant's idea included phrasing about just needing to "allocate the first day of classes" towards implementing the idea, so this idea was rated as 1 for timing consideration. Lastly, an example of a phrase that prompted a 1 rating for HR considerations was "I worry some lecturers are not entirely comfortable with the new system." The coder was also asked to generate a holistic rating for overall idea improvement of the second idea from the first idea. Instructions were given to think about how much the second idea has a more likely positive impact on the classroom than the first idea, with a 5-point Likert scale from one (second idea is much worse than the first) to five (second idea is much better than the first). The researcher and the independent coder used a subset of data from 100 participants (totaling 200 ideas) to fine-tune the coding scheme, discuss coding discrepancies, and reconcile the differences to reach 100% agreement.

Mediators. Because face threat and learning are important mechanisms for many of the hypotheses, both were measured in the post-rejection survey. Participants' completed one 8-item measure of face threat (Goldsmith, 2000) using a 7-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .94. To measure learning, participants were asked a series of four multiple-choice questions that tested their knowledge of the classroom initiative's evaluation criteria used by the confederate (which included budget, timing, and HR constraints) in the idea manipulations.

Results

Manipulation checks. In keeping with the manipulation check tests conducted on the pilot data, t-test analyses from the experimental lab data indicated that the rejection language used by the confederate worked as intended for each dimension. There was a significant difference in rejection totality for the low RT (M=3.14, SD=1.31) and high RT (M=6.12, SD=1.05) conditions, $t(134)$=-14.69, p<.05, and a significant difference in diagnosticity between participants in the low DI (M=3.38, SD=1.29) and high DI (M=4.08, SD=1.41) conditions, $t(172)$= -3.42, p<.05. There was also a significant difference in interpersonal sensitivity for the low IS (M=2.36, SD=.99) and high IS (M=4.30, SD=1.26) conditions, $t(165.99)$=-11.27, p<.05, and a significant difference in bilateral inquiry for the low BI (M=2.52, SD=1.13) and high BI (M=3.16, SD=1.42) conditions, $t(127.39)$=-2.87, p<.05. All manipulations worked on the intended dimension as expected. The analysis is summarized in Table 5.

In addition to checking for the effect of each dimension's manipulation on its corresponding manipulation check, I analyzed the data for possible unintended effects on the measures of the other three dimensions. Unfortunately, there were some unintended significant effects. Although the high rejection totality manipulation resulted in significantly lower levels of diagnosticity, $t(119.35)$= -2.45, p<.05, interpersonal sensitivity, $t(134)$= 7.37, p<.05, and bilateral inquiry, $t(134)$= 4.53, p<.05, the strongest effect was on the intended dimension of rejection totality, $t(134)$=-14.69, p<.05. Similarly, the high interpersonal sensitivity manipulation resulted in significantly lower levels of rejection totality, $t(172)$= 2.18, p<.05, and higher levels of diagnosticity, $t(172)$= -4.32, p<.05, and bilateral inquiry, $t(134)$= -4.57, p<.05. The strongest effect however was on the intended dimension of interpersonal sensitivity, $t(165.99)$=-11.27, p<.05. The diagnosticity manipulation did not have any spillover effects on the other three dimensions, while

the high bilateral inquiry manipulation had a significant negative effect on diagnosticity, $t(134)=3.11$, $p<.05$, in addition to its intended effect on the measure of bilateral inquiry.

I also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on the manipulation check scales to show that the dimensions were unique constructs. Overall, a four-factor model fit the data well, as indicated by the comparative fit index (CFI) and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR): CFI = .92, SRMR = .08. According to these indices, the four-factor structure fit the data better than alternative nested models with three or five factors. Inter-factor correlations were moderate and stayed below .70.

Effects of dimensions on future willingness to voice. Table 6 presents descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables. To test the first parts of Hypotheses 1-4 (part a), which propose each dimension's effect on future voice frequency, I conducted four independent-samples t-tests to compare participants who were in the low versus high treatment condition for that specific dimension. Regarding Hypothesis 1a, which proposes a negative effect of rejection totality on future voice frequency, there was a significant difference in future willingness to voice for the low RT (M=3.61, SD=0.98) and high RT (M=2.80, SD=1.17) conditions, $t(130)=4.41$, $p<.05$. Regarding Hypothesis 2a, which proposes a negative effect of diagnosticity on future voice frequency, there was no significant difference between participants in the low DI (M=2.93, SD=1.19) and high DI (M=3.06, SD=1.17) conditions, $t(172)= -0.69$, $p>.05$. Regarding Hypothesis 3a, which proposes a positive effect of interpersonal sensitivity, there was a significant difference in future willingness to voice for the low IS (M=2.68, SD=1.27) and high IS (M=3.30, SD=1.00) conditions, $t(159.92)=-3.53$, $p<.05$. Lastly, regarding Hypothesis 4a, which proposes a positive effect of bilateral inquiry on future voice frequency, there was not a significant difference in future willingness to voice for the low BI (M=3.17, SD=1.01) and high BI (M=3.24, SD=1.27) conditions,

$t(127.56)=-.35$, $p>.10$. Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 3a were supported and Hypotheses 2a and 4a were not supported.

Tests of mediation on future willingness to voice. In order to first understand whether the rejection dimension manipulations influenced face threat concerns, I ran independent-samples t-tests to compare the face threat concerns of participants who were in the low versus high treatment condition for each dimension. There was a significant difference in face threat concerns for the low RT ($M=3.41$, $SD=1.29$) and high RT ($M=4.78$, $SD=1.01$) conditions, $t(134)=6.88$, $p<.05$, the low IS ($M=2.58$, $SD=.93$) and high IS ($M=4.54$, $SD=1.05$) conditions, $t(172)=-13.06$, $p<.05$, and the low BI ($M=3.85$, $SD=1.19$) and high BI ($M=4.34$, $SD=1.44$) conditions, $t(129.43)=-2.15$, $p<.05$. The difference in face threat concerns for the low DI ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.38$) and high DI ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.43$) conditions was not significant, $t(172)=.00$, $p>.10$. As a supplementary analysis, a regression analysis was also conducted to test the effect of face threat concerns on future willingness to voice. Face threat concerns had a significant positive effect on future willingness to voice, $B=.40$, $SE=.04$, $p<.05$.

To test the second parts of Hypotheses 1-4 (part b), which propose that face threat concerns mediate the relationship of the rejection dimensions on future willingness to voice, I used bootstrap procedures to construct bias-corrected confidence intervals based on 1,000 random samples with replacement from the full sample (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of face threat concerns in explaining the relationship between rejection totality and future willingness to voice excludes zero (-.80, -.45), indicating mediation in support of Hypothesis 1b. On the other hand, when testing Hypothesis 2b, I found the indirect effect of face threat concerns in explaining the relationship between diagnosticity and future willingness to voice not significant (-.16, .15). Regarding Hypothesis 3b, the 95%

confidence interval for the indirect effect of face threat concerns in explaining the relationship between interpersonal sensitivity with future willingness to voice excludes zero (.27, .95), indicating mediation and support for Hypothesis 3b. Lastly, although the main effect of bilateral inquiry on future willingness to voice was not significant, the indirect effect of face threat concerns in explaining this relationship (H4b) was significant, with a 95% confidence interval that excluded zero (.03, .44). To sum, Hypothesis 1b, 3b, and 4b were supported, while Hypothesis 2b was not supported.

Effects of dimensions on future idea quality. To test the first parts of Hypotheses 5-8 (part a), which propose each dimension's positive effect on future idea quality, I conducted the same analysis as above with independent-samples t-tests. I ran tests for each of the four operationalizations of idea quality mentioned above: increased consideration of budgets, timing, HR constraints, and overall idea quality improvement. Regarding Hypothesis 5a, which proposes a positive effect of rejection totality on future voice quality, there was only a marginally significant difference for the low RT (M=.00, SD=.17) and high RT (M=.07, SD=.26) conditions on increased considerations of budgets, t(115.76)=-1.93, p<.10. There were no significant differences between low RT and high RT participants on the other three quality measures. A similar pattern was shown with diagnosticity regarding Hypothesis 6a. There was a significant difference for the low DI (M=.00, SD=.22) and high DI (M=.17, SD=.40) conditions on increased considerations of budgets, t(139.35)=-3.41, p<.05. There were no significant differences between low DI and high DI participants on the other three quality measures. Regarding Hypothesis 7a, I found no support for a significant difference between high and low IS participants when examining any of the four idea quality variables. Lastly, regarding Hypothesis 8a, which proposes a positive effect of bilateral inquiry on voice quality, there were no significant differences between low BI and high BI

participants on any of the quality measures. Thus, Hypotheses 5a and 6a received some support, while Hypotheses 7a and 8a were not supported.

Tests of mediation on future voice quality. I conducted supplementary t-tests to first compare the learning scores of individuals in the high or low conditions for each rejection dimension. There was no significant difference in learning scores for the low RT (M=1.94, SD=.98) and high RT (M=1.96, SD=.98) conditions, t(134)=-.09, p>.10, the low IS (M=2.48, SD=1.14) and high IS (M=2.45, SD=1.15) conditions, t(172)=.19, p>.10, and the low BI (M=2.06, SD=.98) and high BI (M=1.84, SD=.97) conditions, t(134)=1.32, p>.10. However, the difference in learning scores for the low DI (M=1.89, SD=.92) and high DI conditions (M=3.00, SD=1.07), was significant, t(172)=-7.30, p<.05. Supplementary regression analyses were conducted to test the effect of learning on idea quality. Learning scores did not significantly affect improvements in consideration of HR constraints, B=.03, SE=.03, p>.05, or overall idea impact improvements, B=.06, SE=.06, p>.05, but learning did have a significant positive effect on improvements in budget consideration, B=.07, SE=.01, p<.05 and timing consideration, B=.06, SE=.02, p<.05.

To test the second parts of Hypotheses 5-8 (part b), which propose that learning mediates the relationship of the rejection dimensions on future idea quality, I used similar bootstrap procedures from above. Regarding Hypothesis 5b, learning did not appear to be a significant mediator of RT on increased considerations of budgets (-.00, .15), timing (-.02, .01), or HR constraints (-.02, .02), or overall idea improvement (-.10, .03). Regarding Hypothesis 6b, learning did not appear to be a significant mediator of DI on timing (-.02, .14), or HR constraints (-.02, .19), or overall idea improvement (-.03, .40). However, the 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of learning in explaining the relationship between diagnosticity with increased budget considerations did exclude zero (.02, .13), indicating mediation and some support for Hypothesis

6b. Regarding Hypothesis 7b, learning did not appear to be a significant mediator of IS on increased considerations of budgets (-.04, .02), timing (-.03, .02), or HR constraints (-.04, .02), or overall idea improvement (-.07, .03). In testing Hypothesis 8b, I found that learning was not a significant mediator of BI on increased considerations of budgets (-.04, .00), timing (-.02, .03), or HR constraints (-.02, .06), or overall idea improvement (-.01, .13). To summarize, Hypotheses 5b, 7b, and 8b were not supported, and Hypothesis 6b received partial support.

Tests of moderating effects. To examine Hypotheses 9 and 10, I conducted two-way ANOVA tests with each of the four idea quality variables. Regarding Hypothesis 9, which proposes that rejection totality moderates the relationship between bilateral inquiry and voice quality, I found that the interaction of rejection totality and bilateral inquiry was statistically significant for increase consideration of HR constraints, $F(1, 132)=6.60$, $p<.05$. The interaction was also marginally significant for consideration of timing constraints, $F(1, 132)=3.27$, $p<.10$, while it did not have a significant effect on increased considerations of budgets, $F(1, 132)=1.33$ $p>.10$, or overall idea quality, $F(1, 132)=.66$, $p>.10$. To interpret the form of this interaction, I followed standard procedures to plot the effects (Aiken & West, 1991), shown in Figures 4 and 5. When the idea quality outcome variable is negative (as shown in the low rejection totality, high bilateral inquiry conditions with increased HR considerations in Figure 4 and increased timing considerations in Figure 5), this indicates that participants' second ideas actually decreased in their consideration of implementation constraints, representing a drop in idea quality. Contrary to my hypothesis, bilateral inquiry related to lower levels of HR considerations when rejection totality was low and not when it was high. The simple effects tests suggest the difference in HR considerations between high BI, low RT rejections and low BI, low RT rejections is significant ($t=2.30$, $p<.05$), whereas the difference between high BI, high RT rejections and low BI, high RT

rejections is not significant (t=1.34, p>.05). This suggests that increasing bilateral inquiry has a negative effect if a manager is using a low rejection totality message, while increasing bilateral inquiry has no effect if a manager is using a high rejection totality message. For timing considerations, the contrast that is driving the marginally significant interaction is the difference between low BI, low RT rejections and low BI, high RT rejections (t=-1.99, p<.05). The difference between high BI, low RT rejections and high BI, high RT rejections is not significant (t=.57, p>.05). This indicates that increasing rejection totality will only have a negative effect when bilateral inquiry is low, and no effect when bilateral inquiry is high.

For Hypothesis 10, which proposed that interpersonal sensitivity moderates the relationship between diagnosticity and voice quality, I found that the interaction of these two dimensions did not have a significant effect on increased considerations of budgets, F(1, 170)=0.35 p>.10, timing, F(1, 170)=1.73, p>.10, or overall idea quality, F(1, 170)=.01, p>.10. However, there was a marginally significant interaction between these two rejection dimensions on increased HR considerations, F(1, 170)=3.41, p<.10. To interpret the form of this interaction, I followed the same procedures, as shown in Figure 6. Contrary to my hypothesis, diagnosticity related to higher levels of HR consideration when IS was low and not when IS was high. The simple effects tests suggest the difference between high DI, low IS rejections and low DI, low IS rejections is marginally significant (t=1.89, p<.10), whereas the difference between high DI, high IS rejections and low DI, high IS rejections is not significant (t=-.71, p>.10). This finding somewhat suggests that increasing the diagnosticity of a managers' rejection message will only have a positive effect on increased considerations of HR constraints when interpersonal sensitivity is high; when interpersonal sensitivity is low, the level of diagnosticity does not matter for consideration of HR constraints. In sum, Hypothesis 9 and 10 were not supported.

Discussion

The goals of Study 2 were to test the main effects between the four rejection dimensions on future willingness to voice and idea quality, as well as the mediating effects of face threat concerns and learning and the moderating effects of the dimensions on one another. Table 8 summarizes my findings. When examining the main effects, each dimension was connected to at least one employee voice outcome directly or indirectly. The hypotheses related to the dependent variable of future willingness to voice and the mediator of face threat concerns amassed the strongest support. As predicted, rejection totality had a negative effect on future voice frequency (H1a), mediated by face threat concerns (H1b), and interpersonal sensitivity had a positive effect on future voice frequency (H3a), mediated by face threat concerns (H3b). In addition, there was a significant indirect effect of face threat concerns on the relationship between bilateral inquiry and future voice frequency (H4b). Although diagnosticity was not shown to have a negative effect on future voice frequency as predicted (H2a), there was some support for its effect on one facet of idea quality, increased budget considerations (H5a), which was mediated by learning (H6b). Overall, the significant main effects give some additional validity to the four dimensions I drew from my qualitative data in Study 1 as it shows how each dimension can have different consequences for employees. Every participant in this study outside of the control group experienced the negative event of having their idea turned down by the administrator; yet, how the administrator relayed the rejection had differential effects on not only their future willingness to speak up to this individual again, but also on how high-quality their latter ideas were to the administrator.

The multiple significant mediation findings of face threat concerns also provide support for the importance of employee face threat concerns during a rejection conversation in helping

predict subsequent employee voicing behavior. The mediation results suggest that managers should keep a close watch on an employee's face needs and try to mitigate face threat during voice rejections because it can lead to higher levels of an employee's future willingness to voice. Employees who have low levels of face threat sensitivity may be less likely to react negatively and withhold ideas in the future after a turbulent voice rejection conversation in comparison to employees with high levels of face threat sensitivity (Tynan, 2005), so managers who are observant of employee face threat concerns may be able to use this information to tailor their rejection approach and garner more voice. On the other hand, the results show a relative lack of support for learning as a mediator for the relationship of the rejection dimensions on idea quality. While it may be that learning is not an important mechanism for influencing future idea quality, I actually believe the lack of support was due to a few limitations of the study design and procedure, such as its short-term time frame and the fact that students did not have to rely on recall to remember the diagnostic information. These limitations are discussed in more detail below.

My moderating hypotheses received the least support, and in fact, the evidence showed opposite effects than predicted. My results did not support my hypotheses that the hot affective responses to high rejection totality and low interpersonal sensitivity would diminish the cognitive learning responses to high bilateral inquiry and diagnosticity. Instead, I found that while increasing bilateral inquiry had no effect on the idea quality of high rejection totality rejections, increasing bilateral inquiry with low totality rejections actually made participants' idea quality worse (specifically HR and timing considerations). Rather than low rejection totality minimizing face threats that might inhibit the positive learning impact of bilateral inquiry, low rejection totality could have made participants less motivated to improve their future ideas due to the less definitive rejection language used by the manager. Because low totality rejections portrayed the

administrator's rejection as more tentative, participants may have not received enough of a clear rejection message to spur their learning efforts. Also, having a more drawn out conversation with the confederate could have actually added to the lack of a clear rejection message, rather than cementing participants' learning.

Secondly, I found that participants' actually had higher levels of idea quality (specifically HR considerations) when they encountered a combination of low interpersonal sensitivity and high diagnosticity. Coupled with low interpersonal sensitivity, increasing diagnosticity led to marginally better idea quality in the form of increased HR considerations, whereas this effect was not significant when paired with high interpersonal sensitivity. Low interpersonal sensitivity, rather than diminishing the learning effects, may have actually shocked participants into trying harder with their second idea. Again, the appearance of positive feedback that was included in highly interpersonally sensitive rejections may have led participants to believe there was less of a need to pay attention to and recall important diagnostic information from the rejection conversation. Both of these contrary effects could be due to the strength of people's feedback distortion. People have a tendency to distort negative idea feedback into something more positive (Kunda, 1987), and ambiguous feedback that does not clearly indicate success or failure is particularly likely to be seen as positive by individuals (Taylor & Brown, 1988), despite a possible discrepancy with the feedback provider's intentions. It follows then that the lack of definitiveness in low rejection totality rejections and the presence of positive feedback in high interpersonally sensitive rejections may have allowed for participants' feedback distortion to become more pronounced, which in turn could have sent a signal to participants that there was less need for improvement with their future ideas. In other words, it could be that high interpersonal sensitivity and low rejection totality rejections lull voicing employees into thinking that their ideas are being

endorsed more fully and without criticism than they actually are, leading to less improvement in idea quality despite having higher levels of diagnosticity and bilateral inquiry, respectively. On the other hand, when rejections were very definitive (high RT) or very harsh (low IS), participants may have been prompted to pay more attention to the administrator's feedback in an effort to improve their ideas when speaking up again in the future. This effect may have been the result of participants' attempt to save face and maintain a positive social bond with the administrator after being rejected (Leary, Twenge, & Quinlivan, 2006). Failure can motivate individuals to focus on how to improve future performance (Ellis, Mendel, & Nir, 2006), so the strong feeling of rejection resultant from high RT and low IS messages may have prompted a sense of discomfort in participants that served as a lever for greater learning (Kolb, 1984) and change in subsequent idea quality. Despite the results being contrary to my predictions, these moderation findings suggest that the interplay of these dimensions, not just the main effects, can have a significant impact on future employee voice outcomes.

Limitations

While conducting a lab experiment allowed me to directly manipulate the four outlined rejection dimensions and gauge participants' reactions in a way that a field study would be quite difficult to accomplish, it still had several limitations. One limitation in the study design is that it involved a rejection conversation between a confederate university administrator and a student rather than a manager and a subordinate. This was a deliberate study design choice in order to have student participants personally invested in the idea and its rejection. It also gave students' a chance to physically meet with a believable decision-maker for the classroom ideas. Adapting the research design in a way to realistically fit within students' lives I argue adds to the contextual realism of the study's tests, which is typically a prominent weakness when running lab experiments

(McGrath, Martin, & Kulka, 1982); however, a manager-subordinate relationship may have some significantly different qualities than an administrator-student relationship. For example, the administrator-student relationship has a set lifetime (however long the student has to graduate), and the administrator was many years older than all participants in this study. In organizations, there is likely more uncertainty about how long a manager-subordinate relationship will last, and age gaps can vary widely. In addition, managers and subordinates likely have more frequent interactions than an administrator does with any one specific student. The age gap in particular could have manifested itself in students' willingness to comply to the administrator's feedback when submitting their second idea, helping to explain the opposite-than-predicted effect.

The next set of limitations in this study relate to some of the measurements of my model's key constructs. Although my theory relates to future voice frequency, the research design incorporates a measure of future willingness to voice as its proxy in following with several other voice scholars (e.g., Saunders, Sheppard, Knight, & Roth, 1992). Future research conducted in the field with surveys could capture a measure of actual post-rejection voicing behavior from employees to examine this outcome more directly. Also, instead of allowing participants the option of speaking up or staying silent as employees have the choice of doing within organizations, participants were solicited for their two ideas (one pre-rejection, the other post-rejection) during their time in the lab. Because neither of the participants' voicing behaviors were purely discretionary, it may have impacted the quality of the voiced ideas. In particular, it may have adversely affected the quality of participants' second ideas because students had only a short window of time to generate and submit a new suggestion for improving the classroom (whereas students had ample time between reading the study description and participating in the lab experiment to dwell on their first idea). This time limit may have also limited the amount of

variation in my measurement of learning since participants did not have a long enough time elapse between getting the feedback and submitting their second idea to have the voice rejection conversation leave their short-term memory. Future studies on voice rejection could try to accommodate longer windows of time perhaps through a multi-wave design to allow for variations in learning to manifest themselves more in the quality of subsequently voiced ideas.

Lastly, this study was limited by research constraints that prevented multiple iterations for adjusting the manipulations and for testing all possible rejection dimension interactions. Although there were some unintended spillover effects of the rejection dimension manipulations on the other dimensions, I proceeded with this data because the manipulations had the strongest effects on their intended dimension. Also, a purposeful choice was made to only interact rejection totality with bilateral inquiry and interpersonal sensitivity with diagnosticity due to challenges in recruiting a large enough sample and gaining enough power to test more than the two 2x2s included in this experiment. There may be other possible significant interactions of the dimensions, and future research could explore this both with theory and empirical testing. In addition, I chose to keep this experimental design rather than test a 2x2x2x2 that included manipulations of all four dimensions because it allowed for me to enact the manipulations more distinctly without them potentially muddling together for participants. This gave the study a stronger chance to identify each dimension's main effects on future willingness to voice and future idea quality.

Chapter 6: General Discussion and Implications

Discussion

This research has focused on deepening our understanding of a part of the voice process that has received little attention – managerial voice rejection. While much of prior voice research has focused on identifying its antecedents and providing managers with ways to increase employee voice frequency, I have shown that managerial rejection is also an important component that influences significant voice outcomes such as frequency and quality. As managers receive more and more voice from below, the task of idea rejection becomes more routine for managers because they have limited time and resources to implement all employee suggestions (Mintzberg, 1973). My research shows that managers should not take an employee's initial decision to voice for granted. Employees who have spoken up to their manager in the past do take into consideration the way their manager handled their previous ideas when deciding if bringing up their next idea is worth the risk. Thus, if managers want to continue receiving more and better-quality ideas, they need to make strategic choices when rejecting an employee's idea. A wrong choice in rejection strategy can have a marked impact not only on an employee's willingness to speak up again, but also on the quality of their future ideas.

To shed light on this significant yet underexplored phase of the voice phenomenon, I used a sequential strategy of a qualitative study followed by a laboratory experiment. First, using a qualitative study of interview data from both managers and employees, I identified four key dimensions of managerial rejection strategies: rejection totality, diagnosticity, interpersonal sensitivity, and bilateral inquiry. I also gleaned from the interview data two key goals managers try to achieve when selecting a strategy for rejecting ideas, relationship preservation and employee

coaching. My data also included speculation from managers for how their choices in voice rejection strategies influenced how threatened an employee feels in the relationship, thus affecting an employee's future voice frequency, and how much an employee learns during the rejection conversation, thus affecting an employee's future voice quality. Data from employees also confirmed these connections between rejection strategies and their subsequent voicing behaviors. Overall, Study 1 provided evidence of a wide range of variation on how managers turn down ideas in organizations along four rejection dimensions and gave some preliminary suggestions for how these dimensions might affect future employee voice behavior.

I built off Study 1 and drew from existing scholarship on politeness theory and education research to develop hypotheses on how each of these dimensions impact the frequency and quality of future employee voice through the mediating mechanisms of face threat and learning, respectively. I tested my predictions using a laboratory experiment for Study 2 that directly manipulated two rejection dimensions at a time with two separate 2x2s, and my results give at least some support to each dimension's effect on future willingness to voice and future idea quality. My results provide support for the rejection strategy typology I identified in Study 1, which allows for a more fine-tuned conceptualization of future managerial reactions to voice rather than a dichotomy of endorsement versus non-endorsement. I also show the significance of two new mediating mechanisms for voice researchers to consider when examining the effects of managerial voice responses to employee voice frequency and voice quality, and the interplay of these rejection dimensions with one another. As a whole, my findings emphasize the important influence of how managers communicate their rejection message on future employee voicing behavior. For managers, it is important to note that there is not necessarily one "correct" way to turn down ideas (as rejection totality positively affects one employee outcome and negatively affects the other),

and they should be thoughtful about how they combine the rejection dimensions as some combinations can have an effect that may be different than they expect.

Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to the management literature on voice in several ways. First, my qualitative findings from manager and employee interviews add to our understanding of what happens after employees speak up. Because not all voiced ideas can garner managerial support (Deichmann & Ende, 2014), most employees who choose to speak up will experience having their ideas rejected, making this feature of the employee voice phenomenon a significant one. Yet, our understanding of how managers turn down ideas has so far been limited. In Study 1, I build on our understanding of managerial rejection by identifying four key dimensions of idea rejection strategies. By highlighting how much managerial strategies for turning down voice can vary along these dimensions and emphasizing the importance of a manager's rejection message, I build on prior work that has looked at managerial responses to employee voice more on a continuum of positive or negative endorsement (e.g., Burris, 2012) and answer the call for more research on the tactical choices involved during the voice process (Morrison, 2011). Even if the organizational outcome is the same (e.g., the idea is not implemented), my findings in Study 2 show that the way a manager turns down an employee's idea matters for how it influences their future voicing behavior.

Secondly, this research has connected different types of managerial rejection of voice to two employee voice outcomes, future voice frequency and future voice quality. While there have been many advances by prior management scholars in identifying employee and manager-related antecedents to employee voice (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008), this research contributes to the literature by establishing managers' prior

rejection of an employee's voice as another significant antecedent to an employee's speaking up behavior. The current voice literature seems to suggest that managers who do not convey openness by supporting their employees' ideas will receive less input from their employees (Ashford et al., 1998; Detert and Burris, 2007), which paints an unfortunate picture for the majority of managers who do indeed need to turn down employee ideas frequently. My research however implies that employee reactions to voice rejections are significantly influenced by how managers go about the rejection conversation, with some types of voice rejection actually having positive effects on future employee voicing behavior. Secondly, in examining how managerial rejection strategies can affect learning and subsequently, future idea quality, I have identified a new avenue for managers to improve the voice environment they foster within their organizations. Much of the voice literature has focused on trying to understand how managers can increase their employees' voice frequency (e.g., Burris et al., 2008; Fuller et al, 2006; Milliken et al., 2003; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). This predominant emphasis on voice frequency however seems to reveal an assumption by researchers that more voice is always a good outcome for organizations when in actuality, having too many low-quality ideas can be time-consuming and distracting for managers. This research sheds light on how managers can use voice rejection conversations as a coaching opportunity to share critical information for employees to consider when thinking about future ideas. By choosing rejection strategies that support employee learning (such as high diagnosticity), managers can elicit better quality ideas in the future that are more likely to be implemented and have a positive effect on the organization. My examination of future idea quality as an outcome to an employee's negative idea feedback experience highlights the potential upside of voice rejection for managers and employees and underscores the importance of managers getting rejection conversations right. Rather than letting a voice rejection conversation be a negative or fruitless

experience for employees, my research suggests that managers should use these conversations to their advantage as a key feedback session on how employees' ideas can be improved, which in turn, will lead to better ideas from rejected employees in the future.

Lastly, this research highlights a new mediating mechanism to consider as part of the voice process by featuring the influence of employee face needs and face threat on their future willingness to voice. My Study 2 findings revealed that addressing participants' face threat concerns was a significant mediator on the relationship of the rejection dimensions on future voice frequency. Addressing face threat concerns also had a positive direct effect on future willingness to voice. Together, these results suggest that voicing is indeed a face-threatening situation for employees, and face needs become very salient during rejection conversations. Because an employee's face is already in a vulnerable state when voicing, how a manager mitigates or exacerbates the threat by the choice of rejection strategies affects the employee's future willingness to voice. In addition, these results of overall face threat concerns as a significant mediator extend our understanding of feedback conversations with its inclusion of concerns with negative face. During rejection conversations, employees are looking to their manager to address not only their desire to be appreciated and approved (positive face), but also their desire to act with freedom and without impediment (negative face). Prior feedback research has highlighted how negative feedback infringes upon individuals' positive face needs due to the negative evaluation (London, 2003). This can lead to negative emotions (Kernis & Johnson, 1990; Weiner, 1985), so prior research directs managers to be considerate to minimize the negative effects (Baron, 1993). This literature has seldom taken into consideration how different variations of negative feedback infringe upon individuals' negative face needs for autonomy, which this research suggests is also important. For example, managers may see a benefit to giving employees time during their

performance reviews to choose what parts of advice they will prioritize at their discretion, which helps address negative face concerns. Supplementary analyses of positive and negative face threat as separate mediators of the relationship of the rejection dimensions on future willingness to voice show that addressing positive face threat concerns, B=.38, SE=.04, p<.05, and negative face threat concerns, B=.31, SE=.04, p<.05, both have significant positive effects on future willingness to voice. The full mediation results are available in Table 9. Furthermore, the feedback literature often points to the suggestion of focusing on the task versus focusing on a person's sense of self (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). This research suggests that one cannot deliver negative feedback without the employee's face needs and sense of self becoming salient, so rather than avoiding it, managers should proactively try to affirm the employee's positive face to garner better employee reactions. Ultimately, when choosing strategies for delivering negative feedback, including for idea rejection conversations, managers should think about not only how to approve of the employee's sense of self in some way, but also how to make the employee feel less imposed upon during the conversation.

Furthermore, in exploring how the rejection dimensions interact with one another, this research provides some suggestions for how the interplay of face threat concerns and learning influences an employee's future voice behavior. While I originally predicted that the rejection dimensions that strongly exacerbate face threat such as low interpersonal sensitivity would mitigate the learning effects of other rejection dimensions such as diagnosticity, my findings from Study 2 suggest that high levels of face threat actually motivated higher levels of learning, as demonstrated by improved idea quality. This improvement in idea quality could be a result of a concerted effort to save positive face and preserve one's self-esteem by presenting a new and

improved idea that is more likely to get a manager's approval after a particularly brutal idea rejection (Baumeister, 1997; Deutsch, 1961; White et al., 2004).

Limitations and Future Directions

This series of studies, like any scholarly research, has its limitations. Regarding Study 1, I reiterate that although I interviewed both managers and employees about voice rejection conversations they personally experienced, I did not interview manager-subordinate matched pairs. This means that the responses I received from managers about their employee's reactions were speculative in nature and could be influenced by managerial bias. Because managers could only report how they remembered their employees reacting to idea rejections, they might have missed out on perceiving their employees' more nuanced, internalized, or long-term reactions to idea rejection, especially when the reactions were negative. Interview informants giving retrospective accounts are oftentimes influenced by attributional bias and memory distortion as a means for subconsciously maintaining self-esteem (Huber & Power, 1985; Kumar, Stern, & Anderson, 1993), so managers may have been not only less likely to connect their rejection strategies with a negative employee reaction, but also less likely to recall the conversation and reaction accurately. Having data from matched manager-subordinate pairs would have allowed comparison and verification between information accounts, but this kind of data was unavailable. Another limitation of Study 1 is a potential bias in the data due to managerial sample selection. Because I solicited interview participants by describing my research emphasis on voice, my sample likely suffers from volunteer bias (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) with participants having a higher interest in maintaining a positive voice climate than the general population of managers. Prior research has also shown that individuals who volunteer for studies have higher levels of agreeableness and openness to experience (Dollinger & Leong, 1993), so managers who

volunteered to be interviewed may have leaned towards more friendly and receptive voice conversations with their employees.

Both of the above limitations may have contributed to a bias in my data to paint managers' rejection strategies as more effective and thus less harmful to employees than in reality. Without any corrections, I may have been unable to capture the worst ways in which managers turn down employee voice with my four rejection dimensions. However, I did attempt to combat these potential biases and elicit examples of poorly executed idea rejection conversations by asking managers how they used to turn down ideas when they were less experienced managers and including interviews from the employee's perspective. Future researchers could use data from manager-subordinate dyads in order to further test that the correct connections are being made between specific managerial rejection strategies and subsequent employee reactions. They could also use a more generic description of the study when recruiting volunteer participants in order to ensure a wide variety of rejection conversation strategies among managerial participants.

Regarding Study 2, I reiterate that my lab experiment did not directly test the effects of a manager's rejection of voluntary employee voice on an employee's voluntary future voice behaviors in several ways. First, rather than giving participants the discretion to speak up or stay silent, they were actively solicited for both their first pre-rejection and second post-rejection ideas. Because their pre-rejection ideas were requested by the administrator, it may have been more face-threatening to then receive harsh negative idea feedback, leading to stronger negative effects in future willingness to voice. When managers solicit voice, they are prompting a social interaction with the employee and thus triggering the employee's face needs (Tracy, 1990), so an employee's expectation is likely that a manager will be polite and respond in a way that allows the employee maintain face (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 1996). The face-threatening act of rejection

after a managerial solicitation does not align with employee's expectations of how he or she should be treated, so this can cause a sense of relationship violation (Goffman, 1967) that would further diminish an employee's future willingness to voice. Future research could incorporate a design where idea solicitation (versus voluntary provision of voice) is a manipulated variable in order to test if this acts as a moderator on how strongly participants react to idea rejection. Also, because all participants had to submit a second post-rejection idea, my data does not reflect the primacy of future willingness to voice as an outcome over future idea quality. In organizations, it will not matter if an employee learns a great deal from a rejection conversation and is likely to have higher quality ideas in the future if that employee decides to never speak up to that manager again. By forcing all participants to submit a second idea without factoring in their future willingness to voice, I may have captured improvements in idea quality that would not manifest themselves in organizations. Future research with a greater sample size could allow for the second idea to be voluntary in order to clarify when improvements in idea quality might be lost due to decreases in future willingness to voice. Finally, actively soliciting for ideas does not allow for any distinction between individuals who chose not to voice due to lack of ideas versus purposeful withholding (Morrison, 2014). Separating these two types of employee silence will help further build our understanding of how idea rejections influence future voice outcomes. It may be that certain kinds of rejection that negatively impact learning lead to more silence based on lack of ideas whereas other types of rejection that negatively impact face threat concerns lead to more withholding-type silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Future research that allows for voluntary voice and includes a measure of silence can be used to make more fine-tuned conclusions about why employees are not engaging in voice.

The second limitation related to Study 2 is the outcome measure of future voice frequency. Because of the one-time nature of the lab experiment, future voice frequency was not measured directly but instead substituted by a measure of future willingness to voice, following suit from prior researchers (Saunders et al., 1992). The general rule according to the theory of planned behavior is that behaviors can be predicted from intentions with considerable accuracy when there are no control factors that limit the behavior (Ajzen, 1988, 1991). So, although future willingness to voice is likely highly correlated to future voice frequency, certain factors such as time and energy constraints due to increased workload or stress at home could disrupt the connection between an employee's intentions and actual behaviors. Speaking up takes more risk than being willing to speak up and also requires a new idea, so the measure of future willingness to voice post-rejection may be inflated in comparison to a measure of actual future employee voice frequency. This means that managers could experience an even greater negative drop in their employee's voicing behaviors than my findings suggest. Future researchers who conduct a more longitudinal study in the field could measure actual voice frequency to get a more accurate reflection of the effects of the four rejection dimensions.

Thirdly, it is important to note that there are some key differences between a relationship between an administrator and student when compared to a relationship between a manager and their subordinate which could influence the generalizability of the study findings. This limitation specifically was discussed in more detail in the previous chapter for reference. Lastly, another way in which the lab setup could differ from voice rejection conversations at work is that it took place in a virtual chatroom. The employee interviews from my qualitative study did not indicate that computer mediated communications were a frequently used outlet for speaking up and getting rejected. However, because face threat concerns are likely to be less intense over virtually

communicated rejections as compared to face-to-face rejections due to the absence of threatening body, facial, and vocal cues (Schrammel, Pannasch, Graupner, Mojzisch, & Velichkovsky, 2009) and the presence of greater physical space between parties for the rejected employee to save face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), my lab experiment may have been a more conservative test of the damage certain rejection dimensions like rejection totality and interpersonal sensitivity can have on employees. With the number of virtual workers in organizations increasing (Rockmann & Pratt, 2015), future research could explore how the communication medium and time synchronicity of managerial idea rejection impacts the reactions of employees. Despite its limitations, Study 2 did allow for a controlled look into participants' reactions to rejection by inducing specific manipulations of voice rejection in a way that would be impossible to achieve in the field. What this series of studies together provide is a triangulation of methods that helps create a better theory (McGrath et al., 1982) around managerial rejection of employee voice.

Considering that research on managerial rejection of voice has been relatively absent from the voice literature, there is much room for further scholarly exploration. First, there are several individual relationship factors that could have a significant moderating impact on how these rejection dimensions influence future employee voice behavior. For example, employee face threat sensitivity (FTS), defined as the likelihood an individual will experience negative emotions when his or her face is threatened (Tynan, 2005), might make dimensions that are mediated by face threat especially strong in their impact on future willingness to voice. Prior negotiations research has shown that face threat sensitivity can make a party less likely to reach agreement with their negotiating partner, suggesting that high FTS employees are less likely to engage in cooperative behaviors (White et al., 2004). Voice is a prosocial organizational citizenship behavior that is meant to be constructive for the organization (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Van Dyne

& LePine, 1998), so high FTS individuals who are less likely to exhibit cooperative behaviors with their managers are probably also less likely to speak up again after an idea rejection. Because individuals high in FTS have a lower threshold for what kinds of negative communications cause a negative response, my findings suggest that managers who use high rejection totality, low interpersonal sensitivity, and low bilateral inquiry rejections with high FTS employees will see greater dips in those employees' future willingness to voice. Furthermore, research on this construct has been very limited with no tests of the construct's stability across work contexts, so although prior researchers have treated it as a stable individual difference variable (Tynan, 2005; White et al., 2004), it may be the case that similar to other situationally sensitive psychological traits such as regulatory focus (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008), different levels of FTS can be evoked by specific work situations. For example, an employee that has been passed over for a promotion may be in a temporarily high state of FTS that a manager wants to take into consideration when deciding how to turn down that employee's idea. Future research could test the moderating effect of FTS on reactions to idea rejections and provide guidance to managers on how to best tailor their rejection message to their employees.

Another individual difference variable that may moderate the effect of the rejection dimensions on future employee voice outcomes is learning goal orientation. While I described above how high FTS employees may be less likely to speak up again after a rejection than low FTS employees, employees with higher learning goal orientation may be more likely to speak up again post-rejection than employees with low learning goal orientation. Employees with high learning goal orientation desire to improve their abilities and skills and master challenges (Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984), and prior research has shown that they are more likely to seek out situations where they can receive feedback (VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000). This

indicates that these individuals may be generally more inclined to speak up, more resilient to having their ideas rejected, and more likely to focus on idea quality improvements in future voice because they continually want feedback as a means to learn and gain mastery in their work, which in this case, is represented by their focus on understanding what kinds of ideas garner managerial approval. Employees high on performance goal orientation, on the other hand, tend to seek validation of their abilities and avoid negative feedback (Dweck, 1986), so similar to high FTS, these employees are probably more likely to exhibit lower future willingness to voice in order to avoid a situation where their manager could further challenge their abilities with another idea rejection. Future research could test these possible moderating effects so that managers can be aware of how their employee might react to idea rejection based on their learning versus performance goal orientation.

I also think exploring certain manager subordinate-relationship variables, specifically leader-member exchange (LMX) and gender differences, could add to my understanding of voice rejection. Regarding LMX, it may act as both a moderator on the relationship of rejection dimensions on future employee voice and also an outcome variable. First, as a moderator, subordinates with high LMX may not be as influenced by their manager's choice of rejection strategies because a solid foundation of positive mutual social exchanges (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) has been built to buffer the face-threatening effects of getting turned down. Prior research has shown that LMX can ameliorate the negative effects of unmet work expectations on employee outcomes such as organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995) due to the higher levels of trust, social integration (Graen & Scandura, 1987), and psychological support that characterize high LMX relationships. It follows then that LMX could also have a similar attenuating effect on the negative impact of certain idea

rejection strategies on an employee's future voice frequency. Secondly, LMX may be significantly influenced by managerial rejection of voice. Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, and Ferris (2012) found that leader behaviors were the strongest predictor of LMX, suggesting the significance of how managers turn down employee voice in affecting LMX.

This relationship is likely to be even stronger for employees under new managers who have yet to determine the nature of the manager-subordinate relationship and thus are experiencing their first few interactions with their manager quite acutely (Sluss & Thompson, 2012). This hints at the potential need for managers to be especially careful in their choice of rejection strategies when turning down ideas from new subordinates because employees are likely to use the rejection conversation as a means to determine what levels of effort and support to reciprocate towards their manager in future interactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Sluss & Thompson, 2012). Future research that incorporates a measure of LMX could determine if certain types of voice rejection always cause negative effects on future employee voice, no matter the LMX level, or if a certain level of LMX allows managers to use some rejection tactics that they would not choose for low LMX employees. Scholars could also test if and how much idea rejections affect impact employee ratings of LMX.

Gender could also influence the theoretical model of voice rejection I've presented in multiple ways. First, future research could explore whether certain rejection strategies' effects are exacerbated by the manager's gender. Prior gender research on role congruity (Eagly & Crowley, 1986) and leadership style has shown that there is a tendency for female leaders to be rated worse than males, especially when the leadership style is stereotypically masculine such as autocratic or directive (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). This means that rejection strategies that lead to positive employee outcomes for male managers such as high rejection totality or bilateral inquiry

may backfire when female managers try to use them. The gender of the employee in relation to the manager is also a significant factor because Eagly et al. (1992) found that this lower leadership rating effect was worsened when evaluators were male. In the case of a female manager and a male subordinate, voice rejection conversations may be particularly challenging task for female managers to navigate in a way that helps them achieve the two goals of relationship preservation and employee coaching. In addition, the gender of the voicer may also act as a moderator on the effect of the rejection dimensions on future willingness to voice. Research on the gender of job candidates and their willingness to reapply to an organization that has rejected them previously found that women were less inclined than men to reapply (Fernandez-Mateo & Coh, 2015), suggesting that female employees may be more likely to factor in how their previous ideas were rejected than men when deciding to voice again. In my lab study, the rejecter was played by a female confederate, and there were no significant correlations between participant gender and voice outcomes. In a supplementary analysis, I found that gender moderated the effect of diagnosticity on willingness to voice, such that higher levels of diagnosticity made male participants less willing to voice, but female participants more willing, $F(1,170)=7.04$, $p<.05$). This could have influenced why I found no support for a direct negative effect of diagnosticity on future willingness to voice. Future experiments on voice rejection could manipulate the gender of the rejecter in order to test which rejection dimensions and voice outcomes are most sensitive to gender effects.

An additional avenue for exploring voice rejection in the future is examining the effects of managerial rejection over time. While some kinds of rejection might initially have a positive effect on future willingness to voice, the choice in rejection strategy may become less effective after repeated use by a manager. For example, my Study 2 results show that low rejection totality has

a less negative effect on future willingness to voice than high rejection totality. However, if employees get a tentative response from their manager with a deferral of judgment multiple times, they might begin to suspect that the manager's feedback is not genuine and the intentions are just to appease the employee rather than support the idea. This could lower their sense of futility in voicing and thus lower their willingness to speak up again in the future. Prior research on negative events has shown that the negative emotions individuals experience can change after repeated exposure from initial anger and frustration to resignation and depression (Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993), so repeated rejections may trigger a different emotional reaction that changes how managers' rejection strategy choices impact future voice behavior. With a longitudinal research design, future researchers could explore the distinction between employee reactions to having their ideas rejected during a voice rejection conversation versus their reactions to having their ideas not implemented after potentially receiving partial support when the idea was first pitched. To say it differently, managers can let ideas die within organizations in multiple ways, and while this research has focused on more immediate idea rejection, future research could explore the effects of slowly-executed idea rejection.

Practical Implications and Conclusions

Trying to maintain an environment where employees continue to voice after having their previous ideas rejected is a tricky task for managers. It is, however, a critical task for managers to get right since they will likely hear many infeasible and poorly thought out ideas before discovering upon the kind of employee idea that has a significant positive impact on the organization. Thus, in order to keep the idea floodgates open, managers must take care to choose the most appropriate rejection strategies when turning down their employees' voice. In addition, to make best use of their limited time, managers can capitalize on voice rejection conversations as

a means to improving their employees' future idea quality. My findings offer managers practical guidance for how best to turn down employees' ideas without hurting their current relationships, improving their chances of getting more frequent and higher-quality ideas in the future.

For example, my results suggest that depending on whether a manager's focus is employee relationship preservation or coaching, different types of idea rejection are likely to yield the best future employee voice outcomes. Managers that are looking to minimize the negative effects of rejecting an employee's idea on future employee voice frequency should do so with low rejection totality and high interpersonal sensitivity, taking special care to mitigate an employee's face threat concerns. On the other hand, managers that are looking to coach their employees and improve their future idea quality might focus more on having high rejection totality and diagnosticity. For organizations that want to foster a voice-friendly environment in which their employees continue to speak up, my research suggests that giving managers guidance for how to reject employee voice more effectively may be beneficial not just in terms of voice frequency, but also idea quality. By concentrating on developing and testing theory around managerial rejection of voice, I have shed light on the various ways in which managers reject employee ideas and how the rejection tactics they choose have differential consequences on future employee voicing behavior.

Tables

Table 1: First Order Codes of Managerial Tactics for Turning Down Voiced Ideas

	Code Description	Examples
Decision firmness	*Flexible:* Manager's response to the idea is more open-ended	• Don't give a hard no (5M, 12M, 17M) • "Could happen in the future" (2M) • "Table ideas" (5M) • "Let's revisit" without specific deadline (10M) • "Bucket it for later" (13M) (14M, 18M)
	Firm: Manager's response to the idea is a hard no	• "Be stern and firm" (8M)
Partial rejection	*Complete rejection:* Manager turns down entire idea	• Give employee a complete no
	Partial rejection: Manager turns down some of the idea while supporting some of the idea	• Give a partial yes (14M) • Let employee conduct a pilot study (6M) • Allow employee to "take [idea] halfway" (8M) • Allow employee to "dig in deeper" (5M) • Give employee some "runway" (7M)

Table 1, continued

Decision speed	*Immediate:* Manager makes the endorsement decision quickly, oftentimes based on gut	• Do not stall on evaluating the decision (12M)
	Delayed: Manager delays passing judgment on the idea	• Withhold judgment (11M) until employee can gather more evidence/justification (5M, 15M) • Withhold judgment until idea has more time (12, 19M) • Allow people breathing room to further investigate and develop idea before final judgment (3M) • Withhold judgment until manager can think more about the idea (10M) • Postpone idea discussion and judgment until a better work time (18M)
Feedback communication speed	*Immediate:* Manager communicates rejection straightaway	• Communicate decision first (14M) • Do not stall, shoot down ideas quickly (12M) • Give immediate feedback (8M, 10M, 21M)
	Stalled: Manager takes some time to communicate rejection	• "Walk them down slowly" (13M)
Decision context transparency	*High:* Manager provides employee with contextual information on rejection decision	• Give context for why idea is being turned down (3M, 4M, 6M, 9M, 13M, 14M, 18M, 19M, 20M, 21M) • Be specific about org and implementation constraints (5M) • Focus on facts to be objective (6M)
	Low: Manager does not provide employee with contextual information on rejection decision	• Give short response (19M) • Do not give information on reasoning (9M)
Brutal honesty	*High:* Manager is open and honest about what he/she thinks of the idea	• Be clear/direct, straightforward, honest (4M, 12M) • Be authentic (4M)

Table 1, continued

	Low: Manager adjusts his/her communication to euphemize what he/she thinks of the idea	• Sugarcoat the feedback (17M) • Use a "crap sandwich" (6M, 15M) • "Soften the blow" (12M)
Employee discovery of idea flaws	*Manager-dictated:* Manager communicates the downsides of the idea to the employee directly	• Be prescriptive about idea (14M, 15M, 17M)
	Employee-involved: Employee participates in identification of idea downsides	• Have person themselves find out there is a problem (15M, 17M) • Lead them to figure it out on their own (21M) • Help them "connect the dots" (21M) • "Give them hints" even if manager knows it's a bad idea (15M) • Suspend communicating just manager's own framework (8M, 12M)
Idea endorsement responsibility	*Manager-maintained:* Manager dictates the conversation around idea evaluation	• Be directive/aggressive towards the idea's future direction (14M, 15M, 17M)
	Employee-shifted: Manager places the decision to support or reject an idea on the employee	• Force the employee to prioritize (9M, 12M) • Flip ownership to employee (7M, 11M, 15M) • Give it to the employee to manage (2M) • Give employee responsibility for pitching idea to upper manager (18M) • "Make people feel like it is their idea" (10M) • Have employee "find it on their own, even if it takes longer, because it will be their plan" (13M)

Table 1, continued

Managerial power play	*High*: Manager uses rank as a means to evaluate idea with a superior air	• Act top-down/command and control (6M) • Act authoritarian (18M) • Shut down employee's idea because "I'm the smartest in the room (3M) • Act as if "my way is right" and there is only one way to do things (20M) • Act formal to enforce hierarchy (9M)
	Low: Manager does not evoke hierarchy while evaluating the idea; treats employee in a collegial fashion	• Be collaborative (5, 7M) • "Make suggestions, not edicts" (8M)
Managerial open-mindedness	*High*: Manager considers employee's idea with an open mind	• Keep an open mind (8M, 12M) • Be open to discussion (4M) • Show interest/attention/patience (13M) • Make the employee feel listened to (3M, 16M, 20M) • Empathize with employee (7M, 8M)
	Low: Manager does not really consider employee's idea	• Be closeminded about accepting others' views (12M) •
Idea redirection	Manager works with employee to improve upon idea	• Build a plan together on where the idea could go next (3M, 9M, 13M) • Collaborate to tweak idea (4M) • Work together to expand on "good seed" of a bad idea (11M) • "Pivot off of" and build on their idea (17M)
Use of questions	Manager asks the employee questions about the idea during the conversation	• Ask open-ended questions to "lead them to water" (7M), (15M, 16M, 17M, 21M) • Go back to goals and constraints, but phrase it as a question vs. being directive (6M)

Table 1, continued

Involvement of others' perspectives	*Team*: Manager brings in perspectives from other team members to give feedback	• Include a larger group to evaluate the idea (5M, 6M, 8M, 14M) • "Pressure test" the idea in a meeting with a small group (12M) • Direct the employee to speak to more people about the idea (5M, 19M)
	Client: Manager brings in client perspective to give feedback	• Frame idea rejection around potential reaction of clients (8M, 17M)
	Upper-level manager: Manager brings in upper-level manager perspective to give feedback	• Frame idea rejection around potential reaction of upper level manager (17M)
Use of failure narratives	Manager includes stories about other idea failures into idea feedback conversation	• Use personal anecdotes about manager's own ideas and setbacks (17M) • Talk about examples of ideas that have not worked out from other employees on the team and why (8M)
Inclusion of positive feedback	Manager couples rejection conversation with some positive feedback	• Be upfront about why idea is good (2M, 11M, 13M, 15M, 19M) • "I think that's a great thought, but…" (14M, 16M) • Acknowledge effort/value for speaking up (2M, 15M) • Encourage employee to continue bringing new ideas (4M)

Table 1, continued

Managerial regard for employee	*High*: Manager acts and speaks respectfully towards employee	• Be collegial (5M) • Be respectful (3M, 4M, 20M) • Take the employee seriously (3M) • Be sensitive to an employee's emotional attachment to idea (7M) • Acknowledge employee's frustration and give "permission to vent" (19M)
	Low: Manager acts and speaks in a discourteous fashion	• React emotionally by getting defensive • Attack the employee personally • Do not take employee's idea seriously (3M)
Feedback focus	*Big-picture:* Conversation is focused on employee's general idea	• Discover what is motivation behind idea (11M)
	Details: Conversation is focused on specific details of employee's idea	• Discuss not just the idea, but the solution/implementation (12M, 13M)

Table 2: Emerging Themes of Managerial Rejection Strategy Dimensions

	Code Definition	Code Dimensions	Examples	Sample Interview Quote
Rejection totality	Extent to which the managerial rejection of the idea is complete and definitive	*High:* Manager rejects the employee's whole idea in a definitive fashion	• "Be stern and firm" (8M) • Be clear on the rejection (12M) • "Shut down" the idea (3M, 5E) • Say no outright (6M, 8E, 14E)	• "You'd want to do something and they would just be like, 'No. You can't do that.'" (6M)
		Low: Manager's response to the idea is a more open-ended (e.g., the manager may endorse some of the idea while rejecting the remainder, or withhold final judgment)	• Don't give a hard no (5M, 12M, 17M) • "Table ideas" for the future (2M, 5M, 10M, 13M, 14M, 18M) • Withhold judgment while idea develops further or manager/employee have more time to think about idea (5M, 11M, 12M, 15M, 10M, 19M, 18M) • Be upfront about why idea is good (2M, 11M, 13M, 15M, 19M) • Give a partial yes; allow employee to conduct a pilot study (6M, 8M, 8E, 14M)	• "I've said no, that's not really gonna work at [this organization], and here's why. And if she pushes back, it's like okay, you can try it… I'm open to discussion… It's like okay; well, let's try it. If it doesn't work, then okay." (4M)
Diagnosticity	Extent to which the rejection message provides actionable, specific information on why the idea is not being supported	*High:* Manager provides specific contextual information as to why the idea is being turned down	• Provide information on the business context (e.g., organizational and implementation constraints) to substantiate the manager's rejection decision (3M, 4M, 6M, 9M, 14M, 15E, 18M, 19M, 20M, 21M) • Provide information on priorities (4E, 13M, 16E) • Use logical reasoning and facts as justifications (5E)	• "Be able to provide a reason and rationale why it doesn't fit with what it is the direction we're headed or why the timing perhaps isn't right, because often that's the case – or the audience isn't right, or what have you, but try to be as transparent as possible" (2M)
		Low: Manager omits specific reasoning for why the idea is being turned down	• Do not give employee much information (9M) • Give broad reasoning such as "we've always done it this way" (8E)	• "[I] might not have given a whole lot of explanation for it. It's like the classic 5-year old kid that asks why, and the parent says because." (3M)

Table 2, continued

Interpersonal sensitivity	Extent to which manager acts respectfully of the employee during the voice conversation	*High:* Manager listens to the employee and responds in a respectful fashion	• Make the employee feel listened to (3M, 16M, 16E, 20M) • Act collegial (5M) and respectful (3M, 4M, 6E, 20M) • Show interest/attention/patience (13M) • Be authentic (4M) • Empathize with the employee (7M, 8M) • Acknowledge effort/value for speaking up (2M, 15M) • Keep an open mind (12M)	• "You always have to listen…at least consider it, whatever it is they are saying… in a manner that they'll understand, but do it nicely." (20M)
		Low: Manager listens to the employee and responds in a disrespectful fashion	• Personally attack employee (6M) • Do not take the idea seriously (3M) • Act closeminded about others' views (12M) • Act condescendingly, as if one is smarter than the employee (3M, 7E) • Act as if "my way is right", there is "only 1 way to do things" (20M) • React defensively (14E) • Lack empathy (7E)	• "A lot of folks don't even listen to the idea, or they just dismiss it without even listening to it." (20M)
Bilateral inquiry	Extent to which the manager includes the employee in the conversation and decision-making reasoning during the voice rejection episode.	*High*: Manager brings in employee's perspective to ultimately decide on how to proceed with the idea	• Be collaborative (5M, 7M) • Elicit employee's judgment before communicating manager's judgment (8M) • Give employee ownership of the decision to reject or endorse the idea (7M, 11M, 15M) • Build a plan *together* on where the idea could go next (3M, 9M, 13M, 15E) • Ask open-ended questions about idea (7M, 14E, 15E, 15M, 16M, 17M, 21M)	• "I try to ask questions to help them kinda come to a conclusion as to, is it a good idea… on their own, then it's helped them grow and at the same time that it's avoided a potentially demoralizing discussion" (21M)
		Low: Manager solely uses his/her judgment to ultimately decide on how to proceed with the idea	• Use top-down (6E), command and control (6M), authoritarian (18M) strategy • Use managerial edict (8M) • Be aggressively directive about idea's future direction (14M, 15M, 16E, 17M)	• "When I started, it was much more of the traditional command and control management style… very, 'you're going to do these things'" (6M)

Table 3: Pilot Study Analysis - Manipulation Check Scale Reliabilities

Manipulation Check Scales	**Cronbach's α**
Rejection Totality	.96
Diagnosticity	.81
Interpersonal Sensitivity	.92
Bilateral Inquiry	.89

Table 4: Pilot Study Analysis - Independent Samples t-test of Manipulation Checks

Condition		n	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI
Rejection Totality	High	210	3.53	1.85	9.25	191.44	<.01	1.30-2.01
	Low	62	1.88	0.99				
Diagnosticity	High	212	3.83	1.35	4.37	270.00	<.01	0.48-1.23
	Low	60	2.97	1.29				
Interpersonal Sensitivity	High	213	4.32	1.49	6.18	125.85	<.01	0.73-1.41
	Low	59	3.25	1.08				
Bilateral Inquiry	High	210	5.47	1.26	10.07	270.00	<.01	1.52-2.25
	Low	62	3.58	1.41				

Table 5: Lab Study Analysis - Independent Samples t-test of Manipulation Checks

Condition		n	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI
Rejection Totality	High	68	6.12	1.05	-14.69	134.00	<.01	-3.38- -2.58
	Low	68	3.14	1.31				
Diagnosticity	High	90	4.08	1.41	-3.42	172.00	<.01	-1.11- -.30
	Low	84	3.38	1.29				
Interpersonal Sensitivity	High	89	4.30	1.26	-11.27	165.99	<.01	-2.28- -1.60
	Low	85	2.36	.99				
Bilateral Inquiry	High	68	3.16	1.42	-2.87	127.39	<.01	-1.07- -.20
	Low	68	2.52	1.13				

Table 6: Lab Study Analysis – Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Female	0.54	0.50					
2. Age	20.70	1.67	-0.13*				
3. Interpersonal Sensitivity Manipulation (High)	0.51	0.50	-0.06	0.01			
4. Diagnosticity Manipulation (High)	0.52	0.50	0.12	-0.20**	0.00		
5. Rejection Totality Manipulation (High)	0.50	0.50	0.08	0.19*	n/a	n/a	
6. Bilateral Inquiry Manipulation (High)	0.50	0.50	0.02	-0.02	n/a	n/a	0.00
7. Face Threat Concerns	3.77	1.36	-0.08	-0.04	0.71**	0.00	-0.51**
8. Learning	2.23	1.09	-0.05	-0.08	-0.01	0.49**	0.01
9. Future Willingness to Voice	3.07	1.16	-0.04	0.08	0.26**	0.05	-0.36**
10. Overall Idea Quality Improvement	2.94	1.15	0.05	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	0.08
11. Increased Budget Consideration	0.06	0.29	-0.09	-0.02	0.05	0.25**	0.16
12. Increased Timing Consideration	0.10	0.44	-0.10	-0.08	0.06	0.11	-0.09
13. Increased HR Consideration	0.07	0.63	-0.01	-0.04	-0.05	0.06	-0.06

Table 6, continued

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Female							
2. Age							
3. Interpersonal Sensitivity Manipulation (High)							
4. Diagnosticity Manipulation (High)							
5. Rejection Totality Manipulation (High)							
6. Bilateral Inquiry Manipulation (High)							
7. Face Threat Concerns	0.18*						
8. Learning	-0.11	-0.06					
9. Future Willingness to Voice	0.03	0.47**	-0.04				
10. Overall Idea Quality Improvement	0.04	-0.12*	0.06	-0.07			
11. Increased Budget Consideration	0.03	0.04	0.24**	-0.02	0.10		
12. Increased Timing Consideration	0.02	-0.04	0.14*	-0.02	0.07	0.29**	
13. Increased HR Consideration	-0.06	0.01	0.06	-0.03	0.11*	-0.01	0.08

Note: N=332, except for correlations with IS/DI manipulations when N=174, and RT/BI manipulations when N=136.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 7: Lab Study Analysis - Independent Samples t-test of Future Willingness to Voice

Condition		n	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI
Rejection Totality	High	68	2.80	1.17	4.41	130.00	<.01	.45-1.18
	Low	68	3.61	.98				
Diagnosticity	High	90	3.06	1.17	-.69	172.00	>.05	-.48-.23
	Low	84	2.93	1.19				
Interpersonal Sensitivity	High	89	3.30	1.00	-3.53	159.92	<.01	-.96- -.27
	Low	85	2.68	1.27				
Bilateral Inquiry	High	68	3.24	1.27	-.35	127.56	>.05	-.46-.32
	Low	68	3.17	1.01				

Table 8: Lab Study Analysis – Summary of Findings

	Hypothesis	Supported?
H1a	Rejection totality has a negative effect on future voice frequency.	Yes
H1b	The relationship between rejection totality and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.	Yes
H2a	Diagnosticity has a negative effect on future voice frequency.	No
H2b	The relationship between diagnosticity and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.	No
H3a	Interpersonal sensitivity has a positive effect on future voice frequency.	Yes
H3b	The relationship between interpersonal sensitivity and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.	Yes
H4a	Bilateral inquiry has a positive effect on future voice frequency.	No
H4b	The relationship between bilateral inquiry and future voice frequency is mediated by face threat concerns.	Yes
H5a	Rejection totality has a positive effect on future voice quality.	Marginal support (budget consideration)
H5b	The relationship between rejection totality and future voice quality is mediated by learning.	No
H6a	Diagnosticity has a positive effect on future voice quality.	Yes (budget consideration)
H6b	The relationship between diagnosticity and future voice quality is mediated by learning.	Yes (budget consideration)
H7a	Interpersonal sensitivity has a positive effect on future voice quality.	No
H7b	The relationship between interpersonal sensitivity and future voice quality is mediated by learning.	No
H8a	Bilateral inquiry has a positive effect on future voice quality.	No
H8b	The relationship between bilateral inquiry and future voice quality is mediated by learning.	No
H9	Rejection totality moderates the relationship between bilateral inquiry and voice quality. Bilateral inquiry relates to higher levels of voice quality when RT is low, but not when RT is high.	No
H10	Interpersonal sensitivity moderates the relationship between diagnosticity and voice quality. Diagnosticity relates to higher levels of voice quality when IS is high, but not when IS is low.	No

Table 9: Supplementary Lab Study Analysis – Separated Face Threat Mediation

Independent Samples t-test of Addressed Positive Face Threat Concerns

Condition		n	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI
Rejection Totality	High	68	2.86	1.33	6.65	134.00	<.01	1.03-1.90
	Low	68	4.32	1.23				
Diagnosticity	High	90	3.17	1.50	.46	172.00	>.05	-.34-.55
	Low	84	3.27	1.48				
Interpersonal Sensitivity	High	89	4.27	1.17	-13.96	160.61	<.01	-2.46- -1.85
	Low	85	2.12	.85				
Bilateral Inquiry	High	68	3.89	1.57	-2.37	134.00	<.05	-1.08- -.10
	Low	68	3.30	1.32				

Independent Samples t-test of Addressed Negative Face Threat Concerns

Condition		n	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI
Rejection Totality	High	68	5.23	1.02	5.87	119.76	<.01	.84-1.70
	Low	68	3.96	1.47				
Diagnosticity	High	90	3.99	1.46	-.46	172.00	>.05	-.55-.34
	Low	84	3.89	1.51				
Interpersonal Sensitivity	High	89	4.81	1.18	-9.86	172.00	<.01	-2.13- -1.42
	Low	85	3.04	1.20				
Bilateral Inquiry	High	68	4.79	1.45	-1.62	134.00	>.05	-.87-.09
	Low	68	4.40	1.36				

Regression Results of Addressed Face Threat Concerns on Future Willingness to Voice

Tested Variable	B	SE	*p*	R^2 of model
Positive Face Threat Concerns	.38	.04	<.01	.23
Negative Face Threat Concerns	.31	.04	<.01	.15

Table 9, continued

Test of Indirect Effect of Rejection Dimensions on Future Willingness to Voice Positive Face Threat Concerns as Mediator

Condition	Face Concern Mediator	Significant indirect effect?	*p*	95% CI
Rejection Totality	Positive Face	Yes	<.05	-.83- -.35
	Negative Face	Yes	<.05	-.59- -.17
Diagnosticity	Positive Face	No	>.05	-.20-.11
	Negative Face	No	>.05	-.10-.18
Interpersonal Sensitivity	Positive Face	Yes	<.05	.58-1.27
	Negative Face	Yes	<.05	.26-.78
Bilateral Inquiry	Positive Face	Yes	<.05	.06-.48
	Negative Face	No	>.05	-.02-.33

Figures

Figure 1: General Model from Qualitative Study

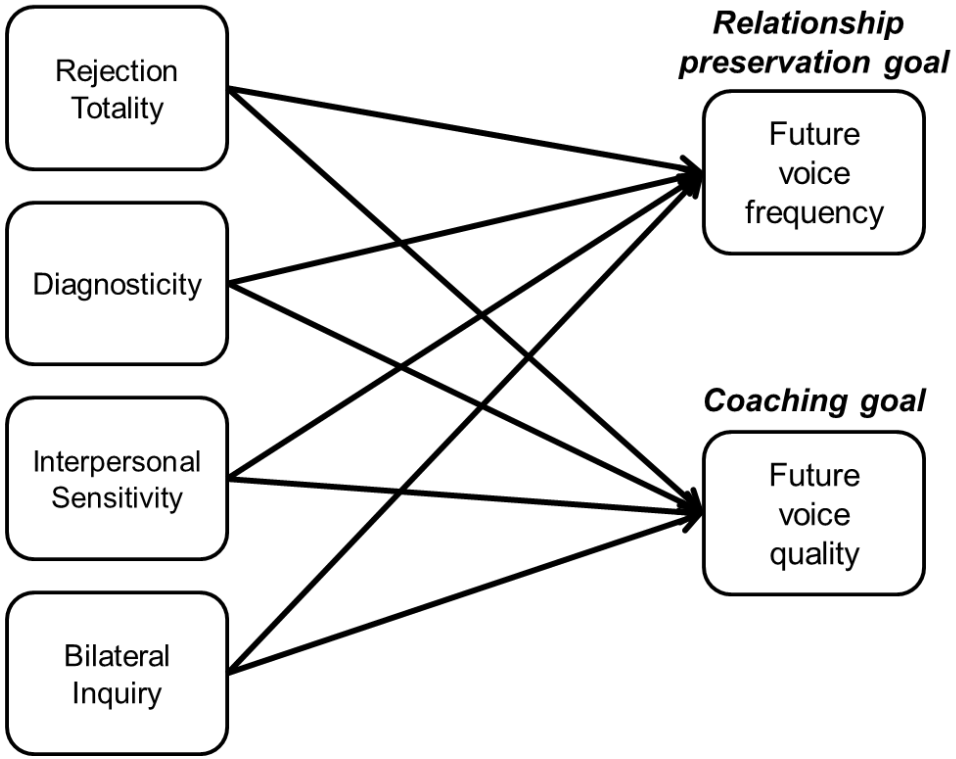
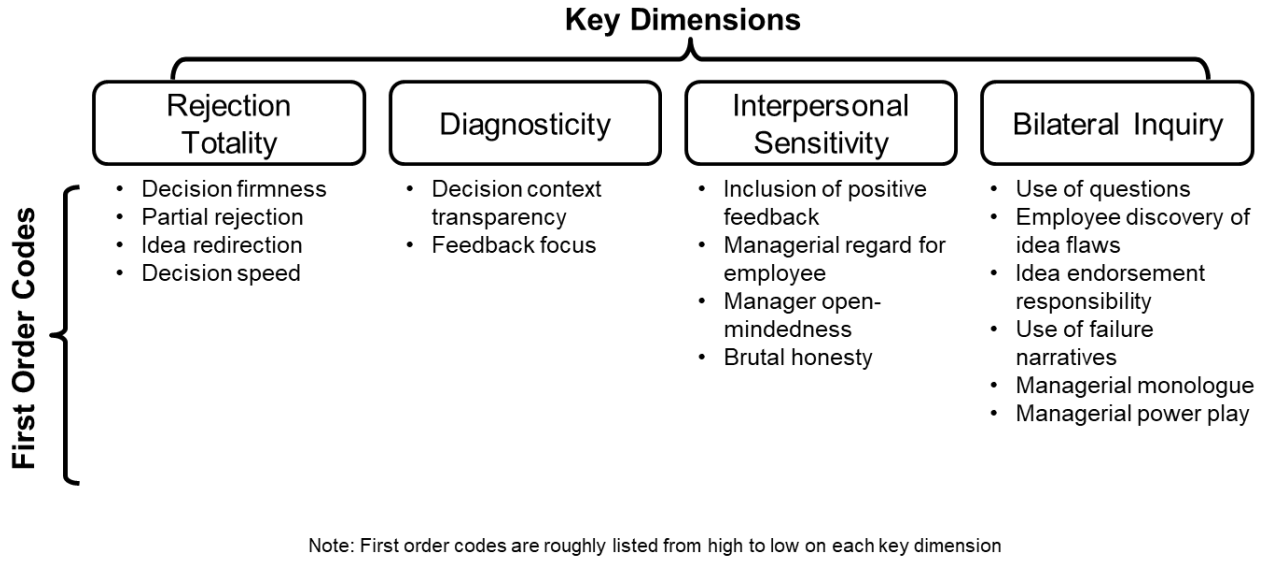


Figure 2: Categorization of First-Order Codes to Second-Order Codes



Note: First order codes are roughly listed from high to low on each key dimension

Figure 3: Measurement Model for Study 2

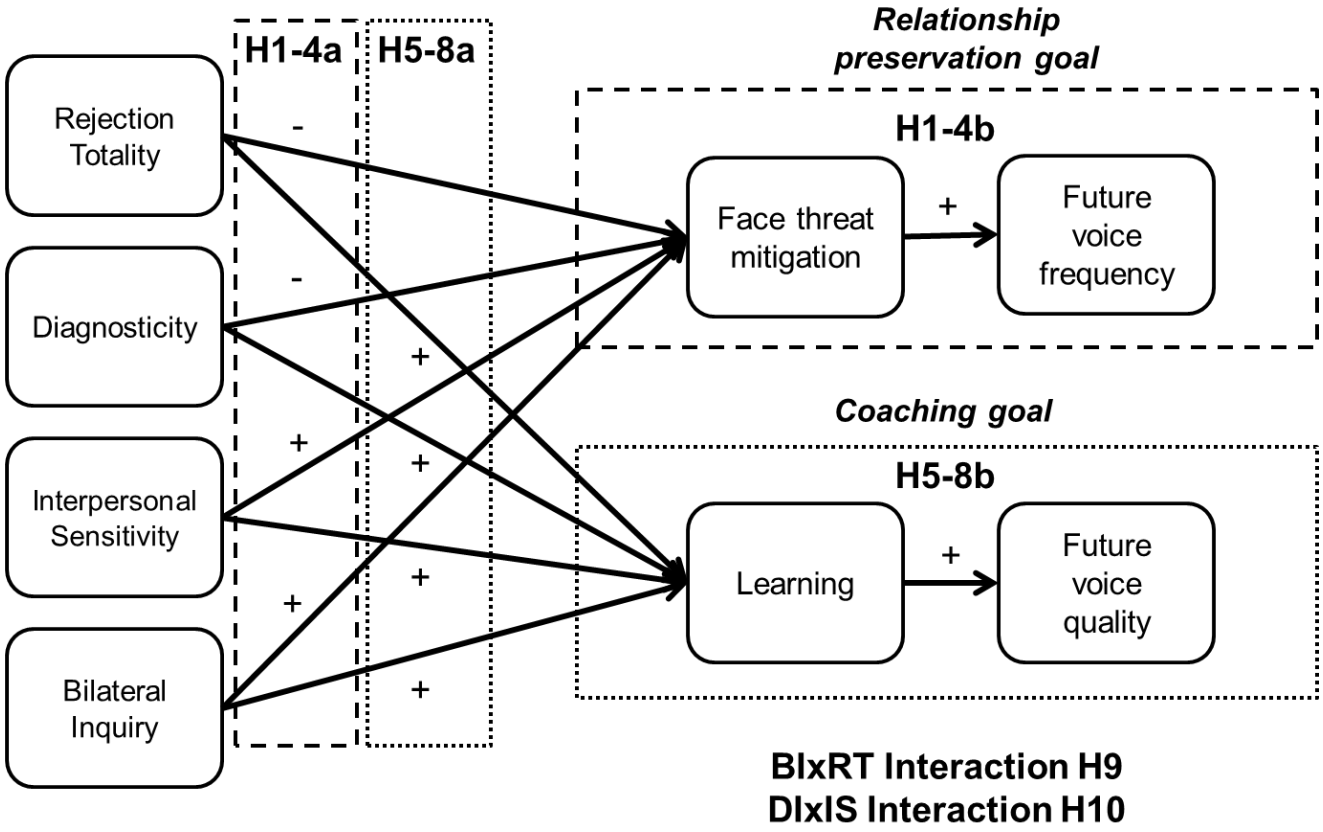


Figure 4: Interaction for Increased HR Considerations (BIxRT)

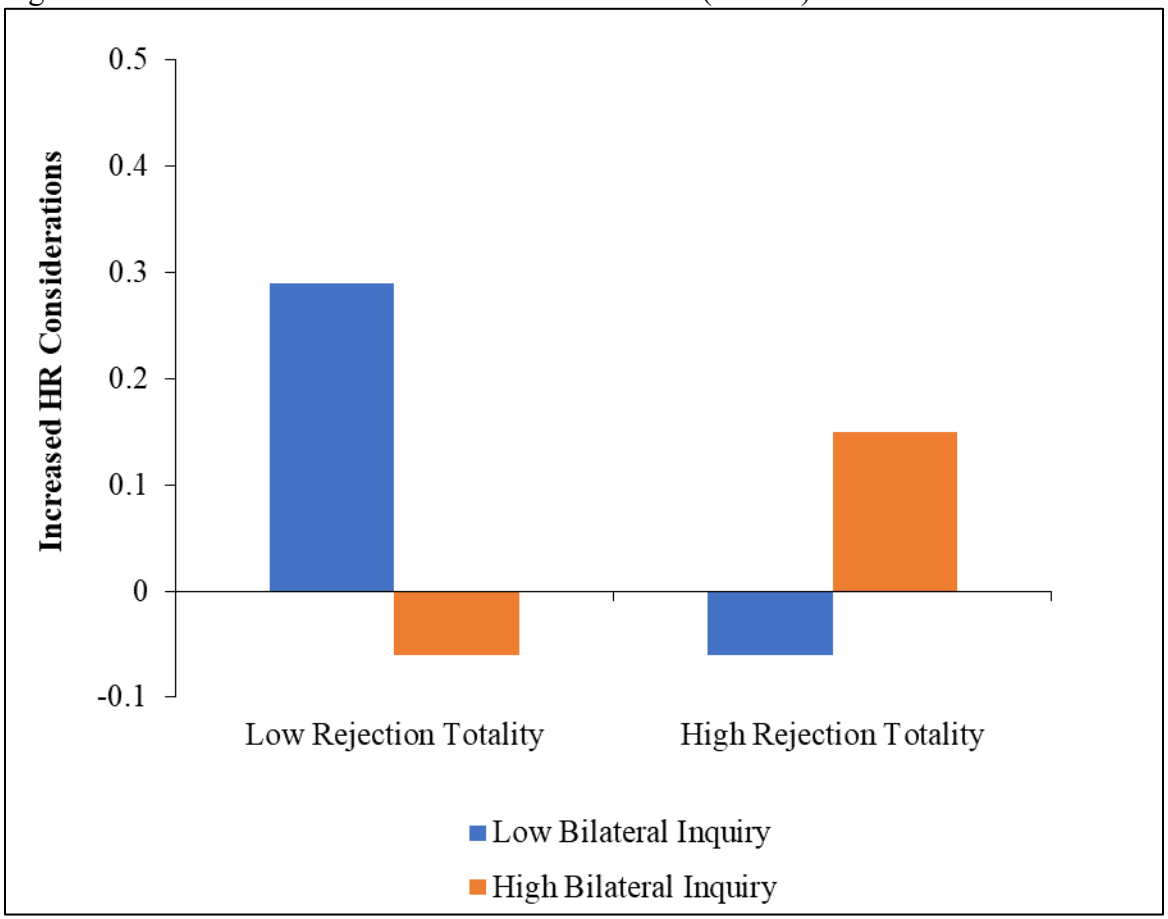


Figure 5: Interaction for Increased Timing Considerations (BIxRT)

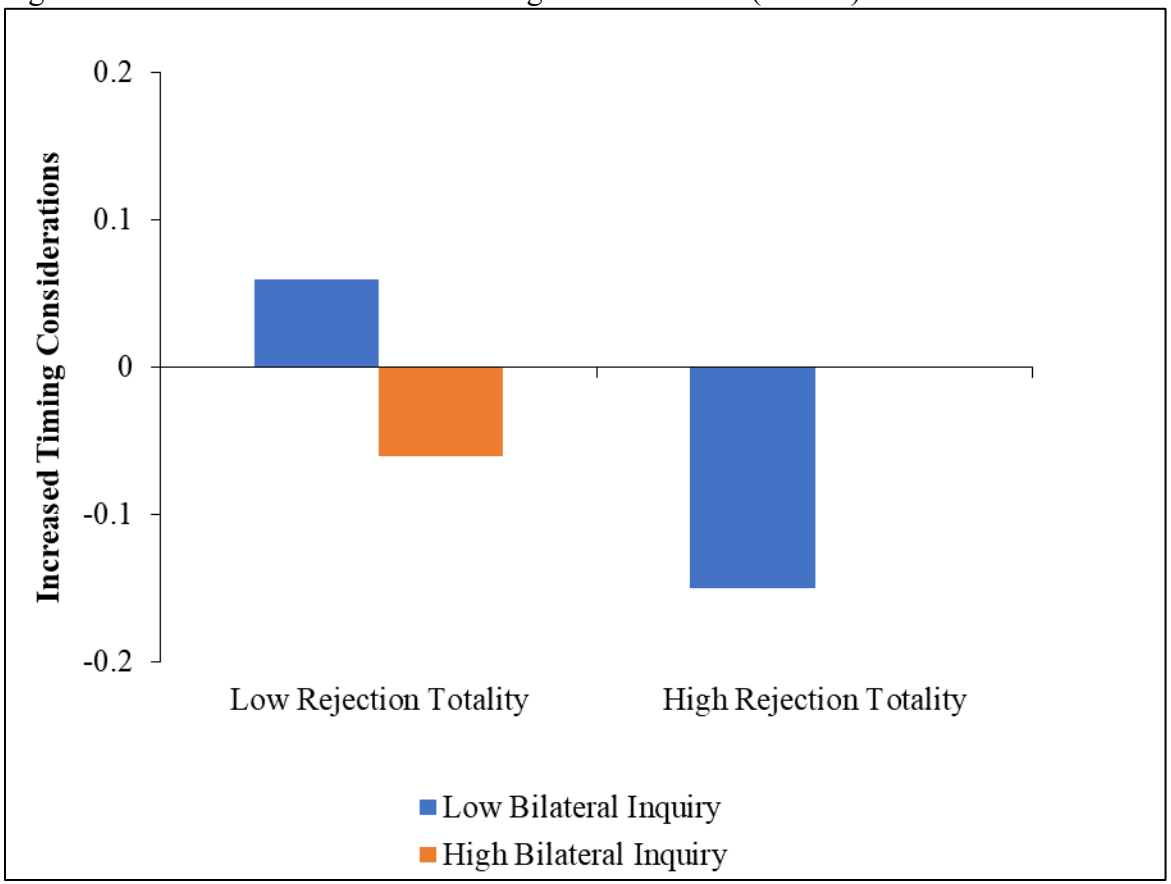
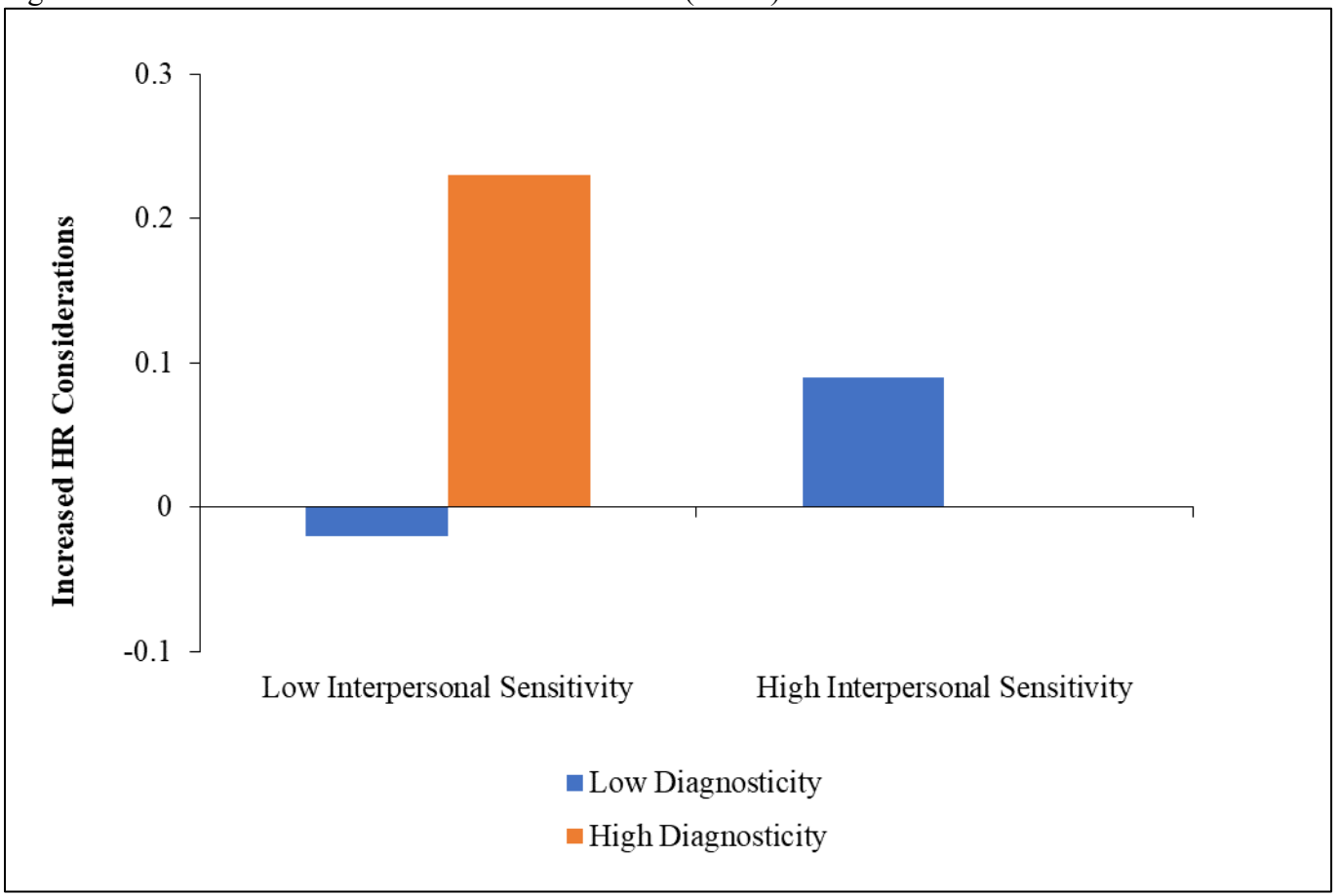


Figure 6: Interaction for Increased HR Considerations (ISxDI)



Appendices

Appendix A – Study 1 Interview Protocol

Manager Interviews

Introductory questions

1. To start off, can you describe your job and responsibilities? How long have you worked at the organization? As a manager?
2. How would you describe your relationships with your subordinates? How long have you managed them? Can you tell me a little bit about your managerial style?

Encouraging voice

I'm going to switch gears now and ask about your employees' coming to you with ideas about how to improve the organization. [Provide definition of voice as context]

3. What do you specifically do to encourage your employees to speak up?
4. How frequently do your subordinates come to you with new ideas on how to change the organization?

Managing voice rejection

(Elaborate) Given that you have this many ideas to evaluate, I'm going to ask about how you think through the process of evaluation and communicate it to the employee.

5. Can you walk me through an example where an employee spoke up to you and you turned down the idea?
    a. Can you briefly describe the issue and what your first reaction was to it?
    b. What factors did you take into consideration when evaluating the idea and deciding on whether or not to support the idea? What goes through your mind when you're evaluating the idea? (e.g., how frequently they speak up, how frequently you've turned them down, how many times they've repeated the idea, how much time they spent preparing for their pitch, how often you reject other people's ideas…)
    c. How did you handle the situation? Can you describe what you actually said to them, e.g., how you framed your response? (e.g., providing rational justification; displacing responsibility; nitpicking specific details vs. rejecting the gist of the idea; being specific vs. vague; being direct with a NO vs. open-ended, allowing them to move forward with no promises; being engaged vs. being detached, etc).
    d. Were you concerned that your rejection may hinder this person from speaking up again?
    e. Did this incident affect your relationship with that employee?
    f. Do you try and gauge their attitudes and engagement at work after the rejection incident?
6. What are the main reasons why you turn down ideas?
7. How often do you think you end up turning down an employees' suggestion? Roughly what percentage of ideas are turned down?
8. Do you find that you customize your approach? (e.g., for different employees – frequent speaker/non-speaker, different pitches – rational/emotional, etc) If so, how might you change the way you handle that kind of idea rejection situation for a different employee? [Can you walk me through another example?]

9. Overall, how do you balance the competing managerial tasks of fostering an environment where people feel safe and open to speak up with needing to turn down many of the ideas? Do you find yourself focused more on one of these tasks than the other? Why?
10. Have you changed the way in which you reject employees' ideas over time or foster an open environment as you've gained managerial experience? How so?

Conclusion

11. Is there anything else you can tell me about how you balance these two somewhat competing tasks of turning down ideas while encouraging employees' speaking up?

Employee Interviews

General

12. To start off, can you describe your job and responsibilities? How long have you worked there?
13. Can you tell me a little bit about your supervisor and your relationship with them? How long have you worked under them?

Voice Rejection

I'm going to switch gears now and ask about issues that you've spoken up about within the organization in order to improve the organization. Specifically, I am interested in your reaction to when you spoke up to your manager and your idea was rejected.

14. Can you walk me through an example where you spoke up and your manager rejected your idea?
15. What was the issue? Was that issue especially important to you? Why?
16. How did you choose to communicate your idea? (virtually vs. face to face, etc)
17. How did your manager reject the idea?
18. How did you feel after your idea was rejected? Why?
19. Have you brought up that same issue multiple times? Have you been rejected multiple times?
20. Did this incident affect how or how often you speak up at work afterwards?
    a. *[If response was negative]* What could your manager have done differently to not have had a negative effect?
    b. *[If response was positive]* What about the manager's rejection communication do you think helped you preserve the relationship/your willingness to speak up again?
21. Did this incident affect your work? Your relationship with your manager? Your relationship with the organization?
22. In general, do you feel like your ideas are endorsed or rejected by your manager?
23. Do you feel like you've incurred negative repercussions from speaking up?
24. Do you see yourself changing managers/jobs/companies soon? Does your experience with rejection play any part in that?

Conclusion

25. Is there anything else you can tell me which relates to speaking up and your feelings toward the organization after your ideas is not endorsed?

Appendix B – Study 2 Participant Survey Measures

Study description

"Thank you for participating in this study. The Management Department Chair, McCombs School of Business has commissioned this study in order to get feedback from students currently taking classes within the school about the classroom experience. The school leadership is also interested in learning about what issues are most important for students with different personalities and learning styles. Thus, during this study, you will be asked to answer various questions about yourself and also asked to provide an idea for addressing an issue in the classroom or doing something new that you think would improve your personal student in-class experience. Ideas can focus on any relevant issue about your classroom experience, including topics such as teaching, facilities, class content, and class structure.

The Management Department would like to hear these ideas from students first-hand, so an administrator with expertise in this area, Ms. Samantha Whitten (Assistant Director of Student Learning) has been selected from their office to meet with you individually in person. During this meeting, you will have a chance to present your idea and talk through it with her. Ms. Whitten has also been tasked with selecting the best ideas and submitting them to the department chair for future implementation. Therefore, during your conversation with her, she will evaluate your idea and give you feedback. Students whose ideas are selected by Ms. Whitten as the best for submission to the Management Department Chair will also receive a reward for their effort in the form of a $50 Amazon gift card."

Chair memo text

Dear undergraduate students,

On behalf of the Management department at the McCombs School of Business, I would like to personally thank you for taking part in this initiative to improve students' experience in the classroom. We are excited to learn more about you and what types of issues you feel are important for improving the quality of our classroom experience.

Ms. Samantha Whitten has worked closely with faculty and staff at McCombs to ensure a positive classroom experience as the Assistant Director of Student Learning for the last six years, so she will serve the important role of listening to your ideas in-person and evaluating them for me. I know she is excited about working on this initiative, meeting with you, and hearing your thoughts on this topic.

The ideas students come up with in this study are important to us. I truly hope that we are able to implement several of your great ideas at McCombs in the future.

Sincerely,
Dr. Luis L. Martins
Management Department Chair
McCombs School of Business

Informed consent form

To begin the survey, read the following consent and indicate your agreement with participating in this survey.

You are being asked to take part in a research study about improving the classroom experience at McCombs. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to solicit feedback on the student classroom experience at McCombs and examine the possible connection between what issues are most important for students with different personalities and learning styles.

What we will ask you to do: The study will ask you to answer questions about your personality and learning. It will also ask you to think of an idea for improving the classroom at McCombs and present this idea to an administrator working on this initiative. The study should take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your participation will be audio-recorded.

Compensation (*for extra credit students*): Once you complete the study in full, we will verify your survey completion. Upon verification, you shall receive the previously determined extra-credit amount as determined by your professor.

Compensation (*for paid student participants*): Once you complete the study in full, we will verify your survey completion. Upon verification, you shall receive $10.00 for your participation.

Risks and benefits: The potential risk to participants is no greater than everyday life. Your participation will assist the researchers in developing a better understanding of factors that matter in the classroom.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. The surveys use unique identifiers, so you will not be asked to provide your name, and your name will not be stored with the data collected. Although your name is not linked to your responses, because this survey is being conducted over the Internet, it is possible your responses could be read by a third party. In any sort of report we make public, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you, and all results will be reported at the aggregate level. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records. To further protect confidentiality, participants' survey IDs will only be used for compensation, and participants survey IDs will be removed from the final data set.

The audio recordings will be stored in a system related to code numbers for each participant. The master file of code numbers will be stored separate from all data. This master file will be destroyed once the study is complete.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: If you have questions, you may contact the researchers conducting this study: Doctoral Student Yurianna Kim, Management Department of The University

of Texas at Austin, McCombs School of Business, 1 University Station, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-3676. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject, you may contact the Office of Research Support at 512-471-8871 or access their website at http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects.

Statement of Consent: By checking the box below I certify that I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I had about the survey. I consent to take part in the study. If you do not agree to participate please exit the survey now.

Please indicate below that you have read the above passage and agree to participate.

- o I have read the passage and give my consent to participate

Pre-survey questions

Learning style

Learning style inventory, 18 items (Honey & Mumford, 1982)

Select either "Doing" or "Watching" next to the statements below, depending upon the part of the statement you most closely relate to.

1. Doing - I often produce off-the-cuff ideas that at first might seem silly or half-baked. Watching - I am thorough and methodical.
2. Doing - I am normally the one who initiates conversations. Watching - I enjoy watching people.
3. Doing - I am flexible and open minded. Watching - I am careful and cautious.
4. Doing - I like to try new and different things without too much preparation. Watching - I investigate a new topic or process in depth before trying it.
5. Doing - I am happy to have a go at new things. Watching - I draw up lists up possible courses of actions when starting a new project.
6. Doing - I like to get involved and to participate. Watching - I like to read and observe.
7. Doing - I am loud and outgoing. Watching - I am quiet and somewhat shy.
8. Doing - I make quick and bold decisions. Watching - I make cautious and logical decisions.
9. Doing - I speak fast, while thinking. Watching - I speak slowly, after thinking.

Select either "Thinking" or "Feeling" next to the statement below, depending upon the part of the statement you most closely relate to.

1. Thinking - I ask probing questions when learning a new subject. Feeling - I am good at picking up hints and techniques from other people.
2. Thinking - I am rational and logical. Feeling - I am practical and down to earth.
3. Thinking - I plan events down to the last detail. Feeling - I like realistic, but flexible plans.
4. Thinking - I like to know the right answers before trying something new. Feeling - I try things out by practicing to see if they work.
5. Thinking - I analyze reports to find the basic assumptions and inconsistencies. Feeling - I rely upon others to give me the basic gist of reports.
6. Thinking - I prefer working alone. Feeling - I enjoy working with others.
7. Thinking - Others would describe me as serious, reserved, and formal. Feeling - Others would describe me as verbal, expressive, and informal.

8. Thinking - I use facts to make decisions. Feeling - I use feelings to make decisions.
9. Thinking - I am difficult to get to know. Feeling - I am easy to get to know.

Personality

Big 5 personality, 10 items, 7-point scale (Gosling et. al, 2003)

Please select the option that best reflects your opinions.

I see myself as…

1. … extraverted, enthusiastic
2. … critical, quarrelsome
3. … dependable, self-disciplined
4. … anxious, easily upset
5. … open to new experiences, complex
6. … reserved, quiet
7. … sympathetic, warm
8. … disorganized, careless
9. … calm, emotionally stable
10. … conventional, uncreative

Proactive personality, 4 items, 7-point scale (abbreviated from Batement & Crant, 2003)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

11. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life
12. If I see something I don't like, I fix it
13. I am always looking for better ways to do things
14. When I have a problem, I tackle it head-on

Face threat sensitivity, 6 items, 9-point scale (adapted from Tynan, 2005)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1. I don't get offended easily. (R)
2. I don't respond well to direct criticism
3. My feelings get hurt easily
4. It takes a lot to offend me (R)
5. It takes a lot to hurt my feelings (R)
6. I am rarely saddened by anything people say about me (R)

Feedback seeking behavior, 5 items, 7-point scale (adapted from VandeWalle et. al, 2000)

How frequently do you ask your teachers for feedback regarding

1. your overall class performance
2. your technical performance in the classroom
3. your teachers' role expectations for you
4. your social behaviors in the classroom
5. your values and attitude, and whether they are appropriate for the classroom

Demographics

- Gender
- Age

- Class year
- Years of work experience
- Native language
- Years spent speaking English

Idea solicitation step

Idea solicitation, 2-part prompt (Kimmons, Burris, and Martins, 2014)

"In the first section of this study, please describe a SPECIFIC idea you have for addressing an issue in the classroom or doing something new that you think would lead to a noticeable improvement in your personal student experience.

Note: Any identifying information from your responses will be removed, so please answer candidly.

1. Please provide a brief description of your idea.
2. Now, please explain WHY the idea you've noted is an important one that needs to be addressed."

Perceived probability of successful selection, 3 items, 7-point scale (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, Dutton 1998)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1. I am confident that the suggestion that I submitted will be adopted at The University of Texas.
2. I believe that the critical decision makers will implement the suggestion that I submitted to The University of Texas.
3. I am confident that the critical decision makers will pay attention to the suggestion that I submitted to The University of Texas.

Post-task questions

Potential mediators

Face threat, 8 items, 7-point scale (adapted from Goldsmith, 2000)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1. This administrator's advice shows that s/he thinks highly of my abilities
2. This administrator's advice makes me feel good about myself
3. This administrator's advice makes me feel liked and accepted
4. This administrator's advice shows that s/he can really identify with me.
5. This administrator respects my right to make my own decisions
6. This administrator's advice doesn't impose too much on me
7. This administrator's advice leaves me free to do what I
8. This administrator made sure that I felt like I can choose whether or not to take the advice

Note: The first 4 items relate to positive face, while the latter 4 relate to negative face

Learning, 6 items, multiple choice

1. To gain this administrator's support, ideas should impact at least how many UT students?
    a. 150
    b. 350

c. 700
d. 1000

2. To gain this administrator's support, ideas should cost no more than…?
    a. $2,500
    b. $5,000
    c. $8,000
    d. $10,000
3. I am more likely to gain this administrator's support if…
    a. a group of students are currently in harm's way if the idea is not implemented
    b. a group of students sign a petition to have it implemented
    c. the idea helps some students raise their grades in the business school
    d. the idea helps the majority of students raise their overall satisfaction with the business school
4. To gain this administrator's support, ideas should not change the routines of more than what percent of faculty and staff?
    a. 5%
    b. 7%
    c. 12%
    d. 20%
5. I am more likely to gain this administrator's support if…
    my idea involves local businesses
    my idea involves students' parents
    my idea involves local high schools
    my idea involves only UT students, faculty, and staff
6. To gain this administrator's support, ideas should be able to be implemented in how many days?
    a. Within 30 days
    b. Within 45 days
    c. Within 60 days
    d. Within 90 days

Dependent variables

Likelihood to voice, 3 items, 5-point scale (adapted from Detert & Burris, 2007)

If given the chance to interact with this *same administrator* again, how likely are you to do the following in the future:

1. Speak up to *this administrator* with ideas for new processes or policies for the University of Texas
2. Give suggestions to *this administrator* about how to improve my department at the University of Texas
3. Point out to *this administrator* how we could make changes that would make our university better

Likelihood to withhold, 5 items, 5-point scale (adapted from Detert Edmondson 2011)

If given the chance to interact with this *same administrator* again, how likely are you to do the following in the future:

1. Withhold ideas from *this* administrator for changing inefficient school policies

2. Keep ideas for developing new student services to myself
3. Not speak up about difficulties caused by the way professors and students interact
4. Keep quiet about problems with classes that hamper student learning
5. Withhold thoughts about improving students' experiences at UT

New idea solicitation (repeat of 2-part prompt from pre-study survey)

Manipulation Checks

Rejection totality, 4 items, 7-point scale

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1. This administrator turned down my entire idea.
2. This administrator turned down my idea without much hesitation.
3. This administrator was firm when turning down my idea.
4. This administrator's rejection decision seems to be final.

Diagnosticity, 5 items, 7 point scale (adapted from Shapiro et. al, 1994)

Please indicate to what extent this administrator's communication today:

1. seemed like a "canned" or generic explanation given to all rejected students
2. gave specific reasons for not supporting your idea
3. gave vague reasons for not supporting your idea (R)
4. made you feel "in the dark" about the actual reason for rejection (R)
5. gave you reasons for turning down the idea that were unique to your idea

Interpersonal sensitivity, 4 items, 7-point scale (adapted from Shapiro et. al, 1994)

Please indicate to what extent this administrator's communication today:

1. was sincere
2. was friendly
3. was sensitive
4. demonstrated concern for your feelings

Bilateral inquiry, 3 items, 7-point scale

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1. This administrator tried to build consensus with me on rejecting the idea
2. This administrator involved me in the decision-making process when rejecting the idea
3. I feel like *we* decided to reject the idea together

Note: (R) indicates a reverse-scored item.

Appendix C – Study 2 Lab Procedure Protocol

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Attendance sheets
- Debriefing sheets
- Computer numbers
- Study description + Department memo copies

STUDY INSTRUCTIONS:

- Inform participants in waiting area to read through the study description + memo. As the participant enters, have them randomly draw a computer number and write it down next to their name on the attendance sheet.

- Once all students have arrived, researcher says: "Thank you for coming to participate in this McCombs School initiative. The Management department would like to know about the issues you think are important to the classroom. I will now take you to a conference room where Samantha Whitten, the Assistant Director of Student Learning at UT, will meet with you briefly. Do not disclose your name when you meet her. You can leave the study descriptions on the table, but don't leave anything else in this hallway."

- Bring students to the small conference room.
    - Confederate will say: "Hello everyone. My name is Samantha Whitten, and I am helping McCombs examine how current students with different personalities and learning styles are responding to the current classroom environment. I think the Management department will learn a lot from this initiative." [Try to stay neutral in terms of facial expressions]
    - Researcher will say: "Ms. Whitten will be talking to you through a chat program about your ideas so that she can hear and evaluate multiple ideas during one session. I will now take you to the computer room."

- Move the students to the computer room. Say, "When you enter the computer room, please find your designated station. Please silence your cell phones and electronic devices and keep them out of reach for the duration of the study. Using your cell phone during the session jeopardizes the integrity of the study, so please refrain for the next 45 minutes. On the back of your computer number, there are instructions for how to update your profile picture on the chat program you will be using for today's study. Please do this once you get seated and then wait for further instructions. DO NOT initiate any chats at this time."

- Provide instructions about the chat.
    - Researcher will say: "Now I am going to give you 2 minutes to think about one idea you would like to share with Ms. Whitten on a classroom-related issue. Please be sure it is one specific idea you have for addressing an issue in the classroom or doing something new that you think would lead to a noticeable improvement in your personal student experience. Think about how you want to

describe the idea and explain why your idea should be addressed. Do not initiate any chats at this time." Wait 2 minutes.
    - Researcher will say: "Now you may go ahead and initiate a chat with Ms. Whitten by selecting her username under 'Direct Message.' Please send her a description of your idea and your explanation for why the idea should be addressed. Do not divulge your name during the chat. Any other identifying information from your responses will be removed, so please be candid. You may only chat with Ms. Whitten. She will provide you with further instructions on how to proceed with the study. Please try and submit your idea within the next 2 minutes." Wait 2 minutes.
    - Researcher will say: "If you have not yet submitted your idea, please do so as soon as possible."

- After the rejections are completed, confederate will send out the final instructions with the link to the post-survey:
    - "Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link"
    - Note: Participants will receive instructions in the post-survey to raise their hand when the survey is completed.

- Researcher will debrief students and hand them a debriefing sheet.
    - Researcher will say: "Thank you for your participation. Here is a debriefing sheet. Do you have any thoughts or questions about the study?"
    - Keep track of participants who fail the suspicion check by guessing the study hypotheses or questioning the confederate's true identity

- Post-debrief, work on resetting the lab space for the next time slot

Appendix D – Idea Quality Coding Instructions

Please complete the following three codes for each idea.

For coding budget consideration

Does the idea make any reference to a budget, costs, or other financial concerns?

0 No mention
1 Any mention

For coding timing consideration

Does the idea make any reference to a timeline or potential timing issues?

0 No mention
1 Any mention

For coding HR consideration

Does the idea make any reference to who will be needed to implement the idea (e.g., administration, faculty, staff, student government, parents, outside organizations)?

0 No mention
1 Any mention

Please use a comparison of a participant's first and second idea to code.

For coding overall idea quality improvement

How much does the second idea have a more positive likely impact on the classroom than the first idea?

1 Much worse (than the first idea)
2 Worse
3 About the same
4 Better
5 Much better

Appendix E – Study 2 Confederate Scripts for Manipulating Rejection Dimensions

Diagnosticity and Interpersonal Sensitivity 2x2

low DI x low IS

> Your idea seems to have a lot of holes. I just don't think we can do it. It would take way too much time - definitely over the timeline for this initiative of one semester. Have you even thought of how other students' might react to this? It doesn't sound like you've really thought this one through.
>
> Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

low DI x high IS

> Thank you for your suggestion. It sounds like you have put a lot of thought into your idea. I definitely hear what you are saying about [*insert a few words about the issue here*]. [*If their idea is negative:* That is concerning to me as well. **OR** *If their idea is positive:* I can see how that is an interesting opportunity.] But I'm not sure this will work for McCombs because it would take more time than we have for this classroom initiative, which is one semester. I appreciate you talking to me about this, but your idea just doesn't work for this UT initiative right now.
>
> Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

high DI x low IS

> Your idea seems to have a lot of holes. I just don't think we can do it. It would take way too much time to implement - definitely over the timeline we want for this initiative, which is one semester. And it would cost more than the $5000 I have for this initiative. Have you even thought of how this idea requires coordination from parties outside of [UT ***OR*** McCombs *(if you can't think of an affected party outside UT)*]? It will be very challenging to get *[insert affected parties outside of UT, such as local high schools, local businesses, etc.]* to go along with your idea. Lastly, this idea doesn't have much urgency – if we don't pursue it, nobody is really going to get hurt. It doesn't sound like you've really thought this one through.
>
> Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

high DI x high IS

> Thank you for your suggestion. It sounds like you have put a lot of thought into your idea. I definitely hear what you are saying about [*insert a few words about the issue here*]. [*If their idea is negative:* That is concerning to me as well. **OR** *If their idea is positive:* I can see how that is an interesting opportunity.] But I'm not sure this will work

for McCombs because it would take more time than we have for this classroom initiative, which is one semester. It would cost more than the $5000 I have for this initiative as well. Another thing to consider is how this idea requires coordination from parties outside of [UT ***OR*** McCombs *(if you can't think of an affected party outside UT)*], and it will be very challenging to get *[insert affected parties outside of UT, such as local high schools, local businesses, etc.]* to go along with your idea. Lastly, this idea doesn't have much urgency – if we don't pursue it, nobody is really going to get hurt. I appreciate you talking to me about this, but your idea just doesn't work for this UT initiative right now.

Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

Bilateral Inquiry and Rejection Totality 2x2

low BI x high RT

No, I can't use your idea. *[Insert idea description]* won't work for UT because the logistics of implementing your idea within one semester as needed for this initiative would be too difficult. Also, I can't impinge on *[professors' rights to design their courses the way they want/what other students' may actually prefer in class]*. None of your idea is feasible at UT for this initiative right now.

Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

low BI x low RT

Hmmm… I'm not sure I can use your idea. *[Insert idea description]* won't work for UT because the logistics of implementing your idea within one semester as needed for this initiative would be too difficult. Also, I can't impinge on *[professors' rights to design their courses the way they want/what other students' may actually prefer in class]*. But maybe…

I can see how *[professors/students]* could be encouraged to go in this direction by *[the administration/professors*].

That part of your idea sounds doable.

Maybe I'll keep that in mind.

Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

high BI x high RT

Note: "C" stands for confederate.

C: Let's continue to talk through this idea. Have you thought of what this would mean for other students who may have different learning preferences than you?

- Wait for student response -

C: That is difficult for the business school. What do you think professors will think of this idea?

- Wait for student response –

C: Yeah, I agree. I can't force professors to change *[their course/ OR short idea description]* especially within one semester as needed for this initiative. Do you think your idea is doable within that timeline?

- Wait for student response –

C: Given the pushback we would get from some students and professors, I can't use your idea. None of your idea is feasible at UT right now for this initiative.

Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

high BI x low RT

C: Let's continue to talk through this idea. Have you thought of what this would mean for other students who may have different learning preferences than you?

- Wait for student response –

C: That is difficult for the business school. What do you think professors will think of this idea?

- Wait for student response –

C: Yeah, I agree. I don't think we can force *[professors/students]* to change especially within one semester as needed for this initiative. Do you think your idea is doable within that timeline?

- Wait for student response –

C: But maybe *[the administration/professors*] can encourage *[professors/students]* to go in that direction…

We could think about that for this initiative - how to incentivize them.

I think that part of your idea is very doable.

Here is the link to the final part of the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

Control Group (no feedback)

I've read your idea.

Something has come up that I must attend to now. Goodbye.

Here is the link to the final part of the study so that you can still complete the study. Read the instructions for each section before answering the questions to the best of your ability. McCombs Study Link

Appendix F – Pilot Study Setup and Manipulations

Scenario Prompt:

In the first portion of the survey, you will be presented with a scenario in which you are asked to take on the role of a university student, specifically in the business school. As the student, you are providing input on a classroom issue to a university administrator who is leading a classroom-improvement initiative within the business school. This administrator is tasked with listening to students' ideas, providing feedback, and selecting the best ideas for the business school to implement.

After reading the scenario carefully, please answer the remaining questions, keeping in mind that you are the student in the situation. Please answer candidly as there are no right or wrong answers.

Scenario:

You currently attend the business school at UPA. You've noticed that your business classes oftentimes require multiple hard-copy textbooks that are only used in part during the course, and the costs of these textbooks always seem to go up each semester. You wonder why more classes don't use electronic textbooks to save students money. As part of a classroom-improvement initiative, a university administrator (titled "UA") has been tasked with hearing out students' ideas and providing them feedback, in hopes of implementing the best ideas within the business school. This administrator is also going to reward the students with the best ideas with $50. After some thought, you decide to meet with this administrator and speak up about your concern:

You: I think the business school should move towards using more electronic textbooks than paper hard-copies. To do this, UPA will need to work on acquiring necessary licensing rights to distribute electronic copies of commonly assigned reading materials, including but not limited to books, for all business courses. UPA should also make professors select textbooks from publishers that have strong online distribution support. My textbook costs keep rising each semester, and I think this would help a lot of students keep costs down. And the university would be showing a commitment to keep up with technology by going paperless.

[Control – no feedback]

The administrator listens to the idea, but does not provide you with any feedback because something else comes up and the administrator needs to leave.

[low BI + high RT]

Note: UA stands for University administrator.

UA: "No, we can't use your idea. Going electronic with course materials won't work for UPA because the implementation logistics working with publishing companies would be too difficult. Also, we can't impinge on professors' rights to

select the textbooks of their choosing for their course. None of your idea is feasible at UPA right now.

[low BI + low RT]

UA: "Hmmm… I'm not sure we can use your idea. Going electronic with course materials won't work for UPA because the implementation logistic working with publishing companies would be too difficult. Also, we can't impinge on professors' rights to select the textbooks of their choosing for their course. But maybe… professors could be encouraged to go in this direction by the administration… that part of your idea sounds doable… maybe I'll keep that in mind…"

[high BI + high RT]

UA: "Let's continue to talk through this idea. How challenging do you think it will be to work with publishing companies to implement this idea?"

You: "Well, it might take a good amount of coordination in advance…"

UA: "That is difficult for the business school… What about the stakeholders? Have you thought of what this would mean for students without easy access to a computer?

You: "I guess I hadn't really thought of that. I thought most students would have a computer, but I guess I'm not really sure what percentage of students at UPA don't have one."

UA: "What do you think professors will think of this idea?"

You: "I think some of them won't mind, but others will probably be upset that they have to change textbooks."

UA: "Yeah, I agree. We can't force professors to change their textbooks. Given the pushback we would get from some students and professors, we can't use your idea. None of your idea is feasible at UPA right now."

[high BI + low RT]

UA: "Let's continue to talk through this idea. How challenging do you think it will be to work with publishing companies to implement this idea?"

You: "Well, it might take a good amount of coordination in advance…"

UA: "That is difficult for the business school… What about the stakeholders? Have you thought of what this would mean for students without easy access to a computer?"

You: "I guess I hadn't really thought of that. I thought most students would have a computer, but I guess I'm not really sure what percentage of students at UPA don't have one."

UA: "What do you think professors will think of this idea?"

You: "I think some of them won't mind, but others will probably be upset that they have to change textbooks."

UA: "Yeah, I agree. I don't think we can force professors to change their textbooks… but maybe we can just encourage them to do so… maybe we could think about that for this initiative…how to incentivize them… I think that part of your idea is very doable."

[low DI + low IS]

UA: "Your idea seems to have a lot of holes. I just don't think we can do it. It would take way too much time - definitely over the timeline for this initiative of one semester. Have you even thought of how other students' might react to this? It just doesn't sound like you've really thought this one through…"

[low DI + high IS]

UA: "Thank you for your suggestion. It sounds like you have put a lot of thought into your idea. I definitely hear what you are saying about rising costs for course materials. That has got to be frustrating. But I'm not sure going electronic with course materials will work for UPA because it would take more time than we have for this classroom initiative, which is one semester. I appreciate you talking to me about this, but your idea just doesn't work for this UPA initiative right now."

[high DI + low IS]

UA: "Your idea seems to have a lot of holes. I just don't think we can do it. It would take way too much time to get to some agreement with publishing and licensing companies - definitely over the timeline for this initiative of one semester. And it would cost way more than the $5000 I have for this initiative. Even more important, have you even thought of how other students' less fortunate than you might react to this? This idea would affect all students, and not all students have a computer to access electronic textbooks. Also, professors are not going to be OK with being told what kinds of books to use in their classrooms. It just doesn't sound like you've really thought this one through…"

[high DI + high IS]

UA: "Thank you for your suggestion. It sounds like you have put a lot of thought into your idea. I definitely hear what you are saying about rising costs for course materials. That has got to be frustrating. But I'm not sure going electronic with

course materials will work for UPA because it would take more time to get to an agreement with publishing and licensing companies than we have for this classroom initiative, which is one semester. Also, it would cost more than the $5000 I have been given for this initiative. And what about the other stakeholders? Students without easy access to a computer and professors who do not want to change their course materials would be negatively impacted by your idea. I appreciate you talking to me about this, but your idea just doesn't work for this UPA initiative right now.

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